

2dartist

Issue 107 | November 2014

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107

40
pages of
expert
advice

Lighting a dynamic character

Discover how to draw, paint and light an epic character with incredible effects

Design a desert vehicle

Improve your concept car designs with Ignacio Bazán Lazcano's expert tips!

The secret to ethereal masterpieces

Illustrator Anna Dittmann reveals the process and inspirations behind her unique portraits

+plus

- 10 of the best digital images
- Sketch sci-fi concepts
- Paint game environments
- and much more!

RENDER STYLIZED PIN-UPS

Renée Chio guides you through a step-by-step tutorial to paint a steampunk pin-up



Editor's Letter

**JESS SERJENT-TIPPING**

Deputy Editor

Welcome to 2dartist issue 107!

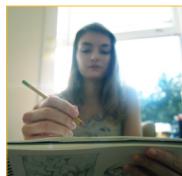
This issue is bursting with characters and vehicles from a selection of top artists. We learn the art of designing and painting steampunk pin-ups with Renée Chio, discover the process behind Romana Kendelic's dynamic images, and chat to the creator of ethereal beauties, Anna Dittmann.

The amazing Michal Kus also gives us a peek at his sketchbook, with pages packed with sci-fi design concepts, while Ignacio Bazán Lazcano leads us through a step-by-step tutorial to improve vehicle designs with a look at post-apocalyptic desert buggies. We've got a whole host of top images and tutorials, too! Plus resources to aid and inspire your 2D art work. As always, there's something for everyone. Enjoy!

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Contributors



ANNA DITTMANN

Anna Dittmann, a digital portrait artist from San Francisco, studies and freelances in Georgia, USA. She shares her stunning portraits with us while also divulging what inspires her.



RENÉE CHIO

Renée Chio is a freelance animator and illustrator. Her work as a professional has been mainly for animation projects, such as feature film, TV shows and animation for live shows.



MICHAL KUS

Michal Kus is a concept artist and illustrator working at EA Games. He is currently responsible for designing and visualizing the environments, assets and props for Criterion's next new IP.



ROMANA KENDELIC

Romana is an illustrator with a background in traditional painting, who is currently working in the field of digital fantasy illustration. She gives an insight into her character concepting process.



JUSTIN GERARD

From the moment that Justin Gerard first learned that crayons were meant for coloring and not eating, he has been drawing. He derives inspiration from nature and human history, though his favorite source is story.



GILLES BELOEIL

Gilles Beloeil is a senior concept artist and digital matte painter at Ubisoft Montreal. Take a sneak peek into *Digital Art Masters Volume 8* with Gilles' incredible game environment, *Boston Common*.



IGNACIO BAZÁN LAZCANO

Ignacio Bazán Lazcano has 10 years of experience working in the entertainment industry, with more than 6 years of experience doing concept art for videogames. He is currently working in a studio involved in a fun project.



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We are always looking for tutorial artists, gallery submissions, potential interviewees, writers and more. For more information, please send a link to your work to: jess@3dtotal.com.

Deputy Editor
Jess Serjent-Tipping
jess@3dtotal.com

Sub Editor
Jenny Newell

Graphic Designer
Aryan Pishneshin

Publishing Co-ordinator
Adam Smith

Advertising Manager
George Lucas
george@3dtotal.com

Studio Manager
Lynette Clee
lynnette@3dtotal.com

Managing Director
Tom Greenway

Advertising

Media pack and rates are available upon request.
 Contact George Lucas:
george@3dtotal.com

International

Translation opportunities and international licenses are available. Contact Melanie Smith:
melanie@3dtotal.com

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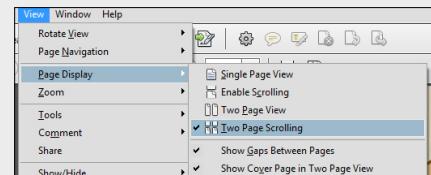
If you're having problems viewing the double-page spreads that we feature within this magazine, then follow this handy little guide on how to set up your PDF reader!

Top tips for viewing

For optimum viewing of the magazine, it is recommended that you have the latest version of Adobe Acrobat Reader installed. You can download it for free here: [DOWNLOAD](#)

To view the many double-page spreads featured in 2dartist magazine, you can set the reader to display "two-up", which will show double-page spreads as one large landscape image:

1. Open the magazine in Reader;
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Jump to articles

In the Contents pages, we have direct links to all articles within the magazine. If a certain article catches your eye, simply click (or tap on handheld devices) on the page number within the Contents, and you will be taken straight to that article.

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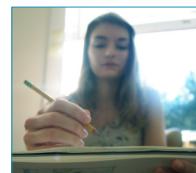


The secret to ethereal masterpieces

Anna Dittmann's work is instantly recognizable for her stunning portraits and use of delicate organic textures. Here she gives us a glimpse at her workflow and techniques, while sharing what inspires and motivates her to create art ➔



The Artist



Anna Dittmann

annadittmann.com

Interviewed by:

Jess Serjent-Tipping

Anna Dittmann, a digital portrait artist from San Francisco, studies and freelances in Georgia, USA.

Feminine beauty will always be a popular subject and a great source of inspiration. An artist who makes use of this is Anna Dittmann, a digital illustrator who has become known for her ethereal portraits, stylish brushstrokes, and thoughtful details. With a love for organic natural elements, mythology, and history, she often blends these inspirations to create digital pieces filled with emotion. Anna shares a selection of her stunning images in this issue, as well as giving us an insight into her creative process.

2dartist: Hi Anna, thanks for chatting with 2dartist today! First, could you tell our readers a little bit about yourself and your background in digital art? What got you into illustration?

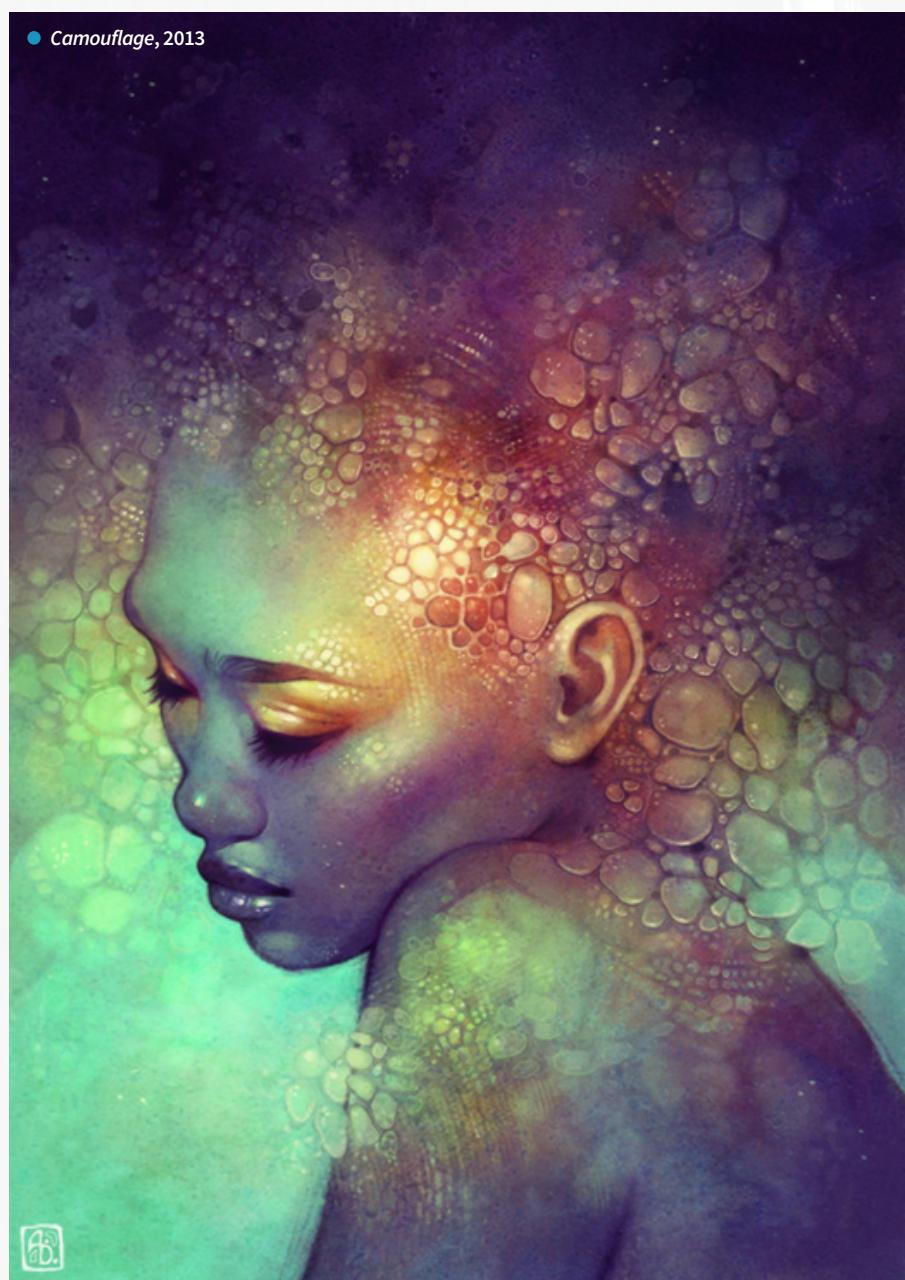
Anna Dittmann: No problem, thanks for the invitation! As a child, my first canvases were the walls of my bedroom and it's been a strange, fantastic ride ever since. I'm a 21-year-old illustrator from San Francisco with a passion for enigmatic portraiture. I began taking painting more seriously after discovering Photoshop around age 13. As the second of five siblings, I grew up in a chaotic yet creative family. My dad loves design and constantly encouraged my artistic pursuits. I eventually moved to Georgia to study at the Savannah College of Art and Design, and am currently working on my BFA degree in Illustration.

2da: What was it about the digital tools that made you want to pursue a career in the industry?

AD: I was instantly hooked the first day using a computer and tablet. Working with unlimited colors and canvases encouraged experimentation and stylistic growth. As someone who was hesitant about making bold strokes, digital art provided the freedom to loosen up. Without the insecurity of wasting materials, I was able to make as many studies, mistakes and finished pieces as I could. I do love the feel of traditional art though, and often incorporate texture digitally for a spontaneous effect.

2da: Where do you draw your inspiration from? What influences your work and motivates you? What artists do you admire and how did they influence your work?

AD: My inspiration is drawn from organic natural elements, mythology and history, movement and texture, lyrics and melodies, expressions, color variations, pretty much anything which makes me want to grab my tablet and paint. Often, a concept



to a piece will be accidental. A loose brushstroke will take on a shape or design of its own, and I'll just go with it. The urge to paint hits me randomly – often late at night when I have lots of work to do. Nevertheless, it's a wonderful feeling!

I'm inspired by realism combined with decorative elements, so I adore Mucha and Klimt's use of pattern contrasted with a rendered figure. I often try to incorporate these qualities into my own art.

2da: What is your creative process like? Could you choose one of your favorite images, explain the details of its creation, and why it's your favorite?

“My inspiration is drawn from organic natural elements, mythology and history, movement and texture”

AD: I normally start with a vague concept and then sketch my idea in black and white. After tweaking the composition, values, and being generally nitpicky, I start seeking out references and refining my drawing. Next, I throw in textures using a variety of layer modes such as Soft Light, Divide, and Multiply; whatever may feel best. I add color highlights using layer modes and adjustment tools. Toward the end, I detail the piece, sharpen it, and call it a day! ▶

⌚ Artist Timeline Anna's career so far

2006: First Photoshop experience

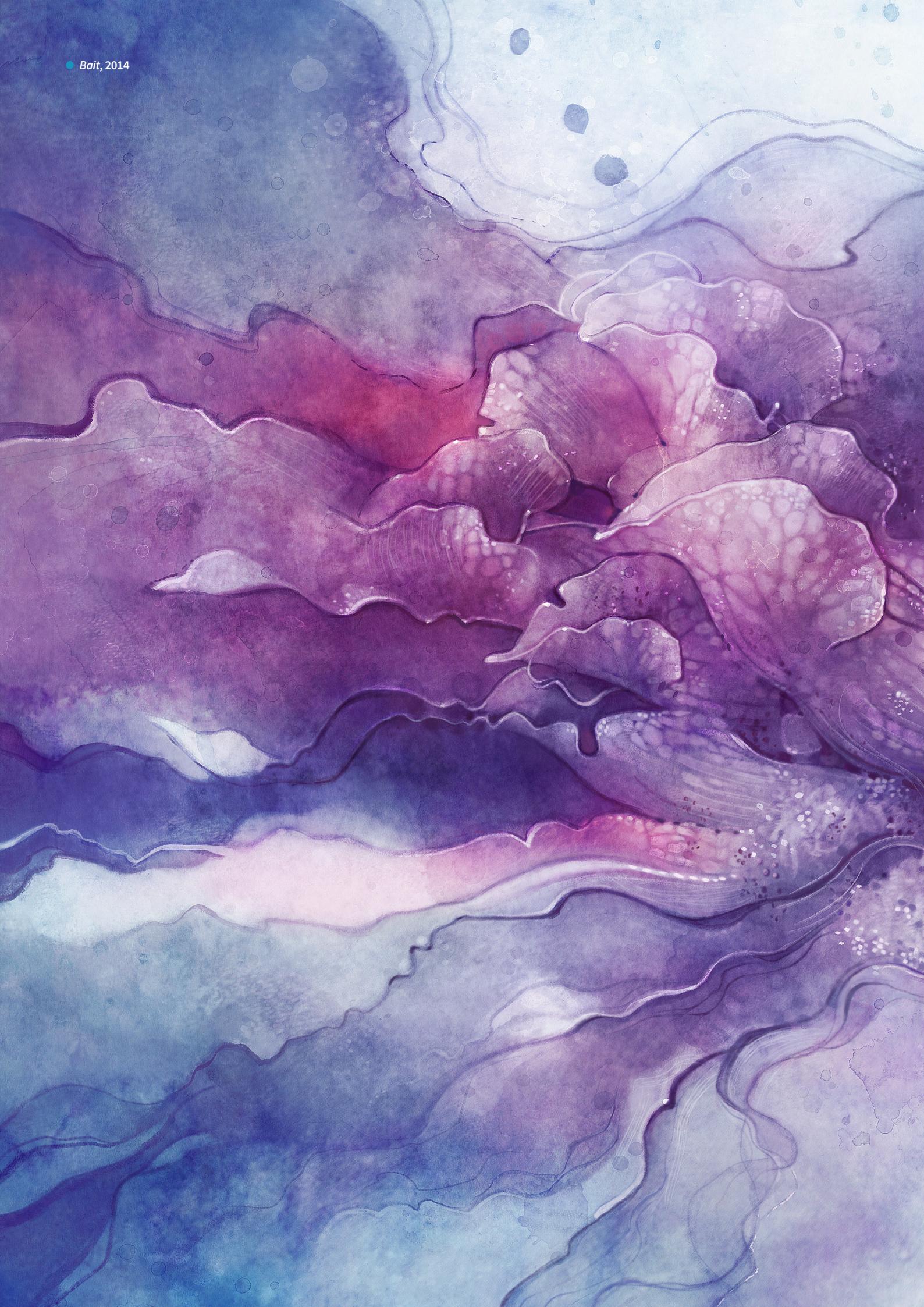
2011: Begin Art College at SCAD

2013: First major commission (ImagineFX covers)

2015: Graduation!

2014: First Solo Art Show









● *January*, part of the *Anno* series, Digital, 2014



“What I love about art is that, with any medium, it’s an eternal learning process”

I’m not sure if I have a favorite piece, but *Oil* is meaningful because I feel strongly about the environment. *Oil* was a poster I designed, focused around the harmful impact of oil spills. Being a lover of all things aquatic, it was disheartening to research

the subject. With this piece, I hoped to emphasize the ugly side of pollution.

2da: Do you have any favorite software, tools and techniques that you use to create your artwork? Any that you would recommend to our readers?

AD: I paint digitally using Photoshop CS6 and my lovely Wacom tablet. It’s what I’m used to, so I can’t

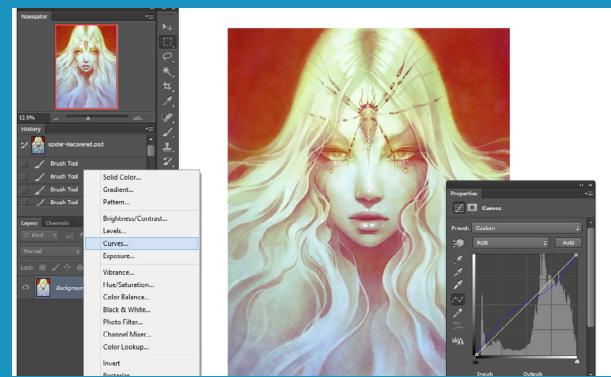
make many comparisons. I’ve had my Wacom Intuos 3 9x12 tablet for about 8 years and it’s still going strong! When it comes to techniques, I regularly discover new tools and have so much more to absorb. What I love about art is that, with any medium, it’s an eternal learning process. ▶

PRO TIP

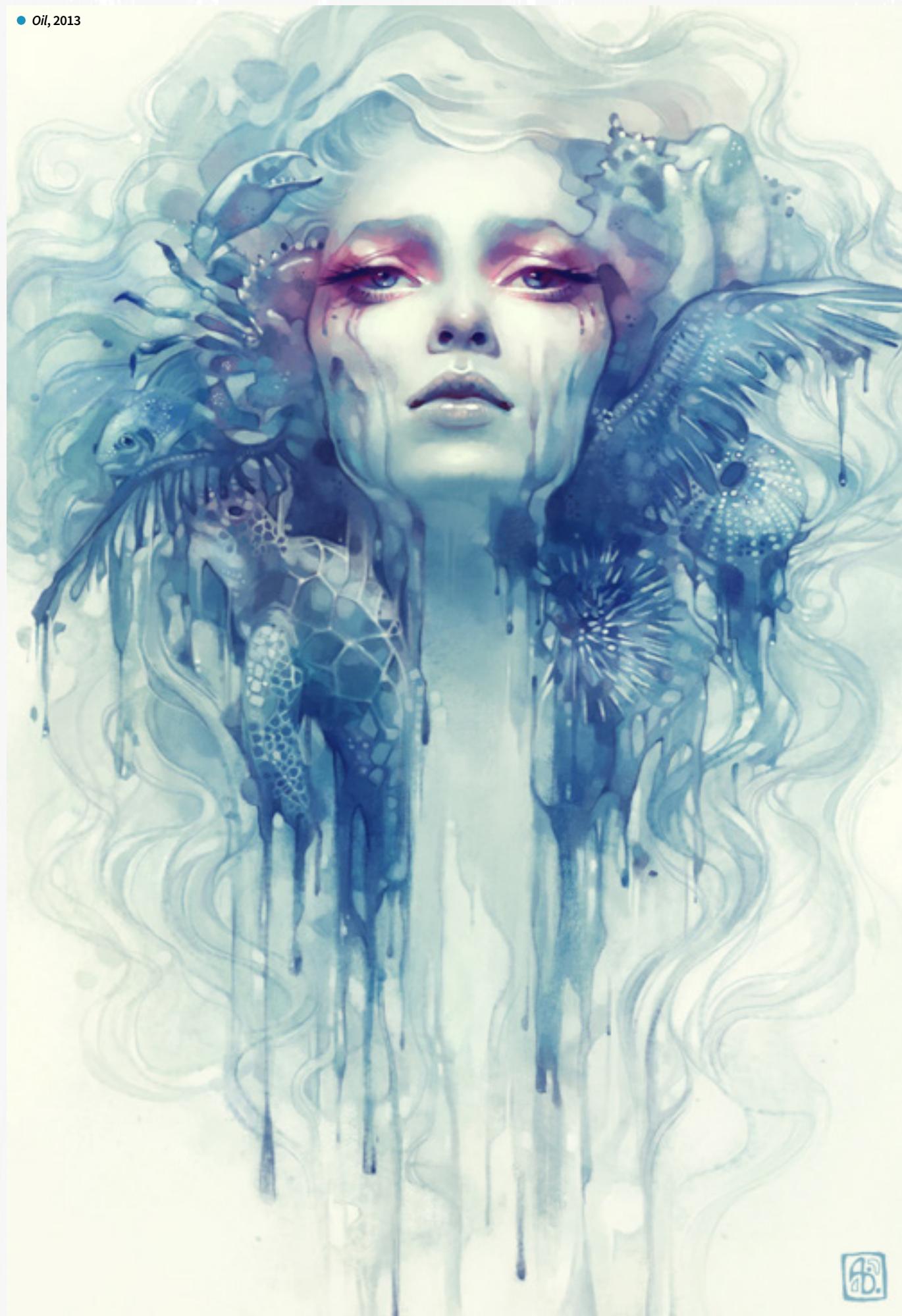
Using Curves to manipulate color

I love adding hue, but I’ve found that value initially trumps color. I begin my sketch in grayscale. If the design still reads after squinting or zooming out, then I impatiently leap into color. Color Balance is great at generating a uniform tint. Afterward, I’ll create a new adjustment using the Curves option from the layers menu. From the available settings, I prefer the Red and Blue options. I shift the points up and down on the graph to create interesting color effects – particularly by pulling out vibrant color in dark or light areas.

- Here, Anna chooses Curves from the layer menu and plays with the Blue setting



• Oil, 2013



AB.

2da: What would your typical working day be like?

AD: My daily schedule includes lots of procrastination and snacking. When I can, I often wake up in the afternoon... I'm not a morning person! In between classes I'll work on homework, personal projects, and commissions, with a healthy dose of TV shows, internet, and baking. I normally stay up till odd hours of the night getting stuff done that I've been putting off all day.

2da: How do you spend your free time away from the demands and deadlines of the creative industry?

AD: When I can, I love finding escape outdoors. I'm constantly inspired by the movement and organic elements of nature. Environmental beauty is a perfect complement to the human figure. I also spend a lot of time around the oven, baking and consuming large quantities of dessert. I watch far too many shows of all genres (and can have unhealthy fan-girl tendencies).

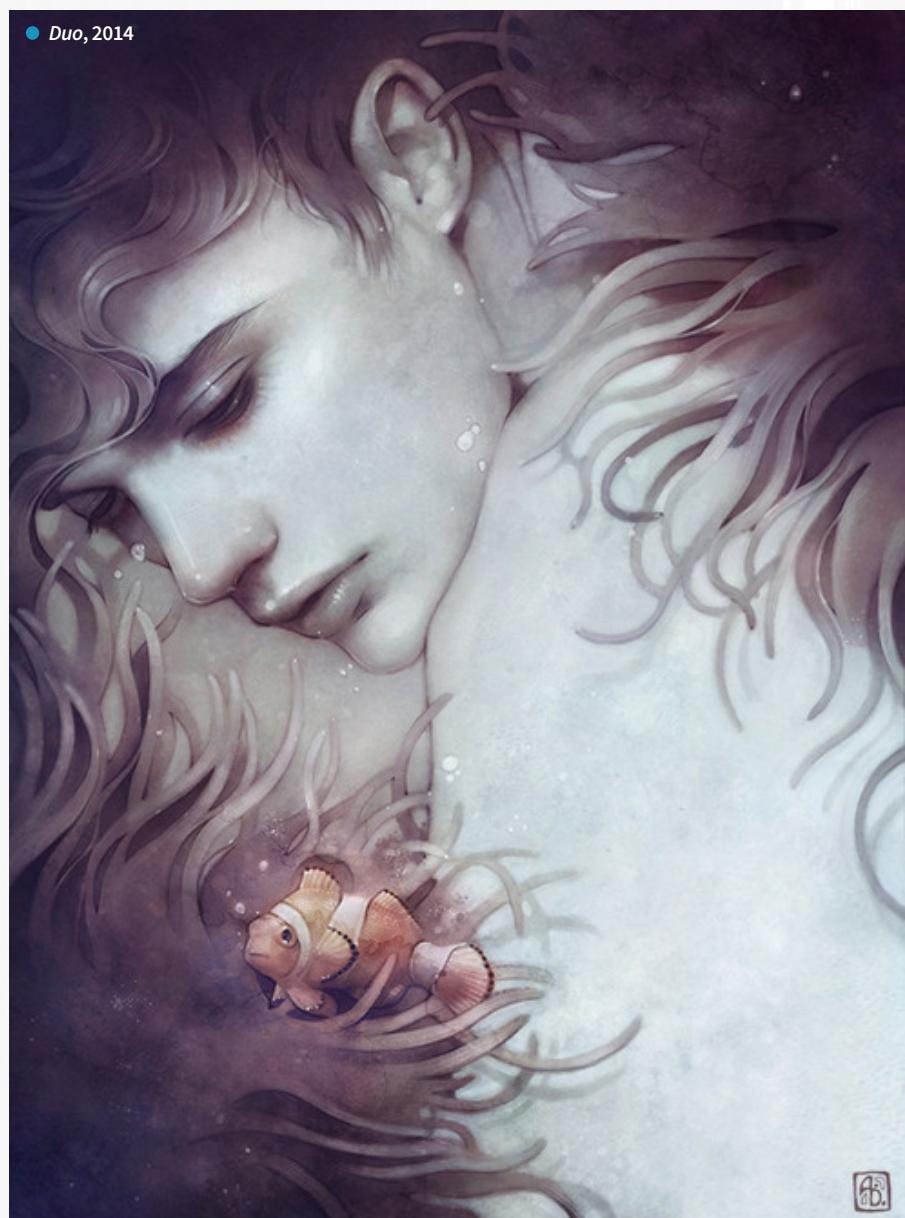
2da: What do you think has been your greatest artistic achievement?

AD: Perhaps it was finishing the *Anno* series. Last year in August, I challenged myself to create twelve portraits based around the imagery and symbolism of each month. The year-long project was initially daunting, so it was incredibly satisfying to wrap up the series this summer. I had a lot of fun and time flew by like crazy!

2da: What would be your perfect project to work on?

AD: I'd love to get started on a new series or publish a set of works. Perhaps a dream job of mine is contributing to film or television. Working in the creative industry on a show or movie I'm passionate about would be an absolute pleasure.

2da: A lot of your artwork has a watercolor/ink look and feel to it. Do you work with watercolor or ink



as well? Are you interested in branching into other media or areas or digital art?

AD: Early on, the unpredictability of watercolor left me discouraged. But I've always loved the looseness

and seemingly random yet readable textures. Digitally, I try to recreate this sense of movement in a more controlled way. I do paint and scan traditional textures to overlay in Photoshop, and am currently taking a watercolor course. By learning new ►

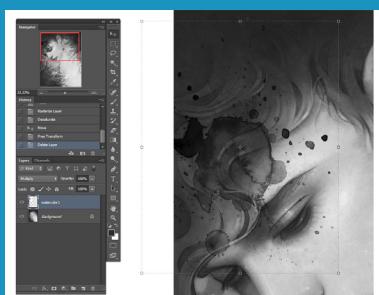
⚡ PRO TIP

Incorporating texture

Textures are fun to make and even more fun to manipulate. They provide a lovely traditional effect, so I often collage watercolor or drip textures over my black-and-white sketch. I'll often desaturate the texture and set the layer's blend mode to Soft Light, Multiply or Divide. By fiddling with the contrast and opacity, I make sure the texture appears seamless.



● Creating watercolor textures can be messy fun



● Experimenting with a desaturated texture on a Multiply layer mode





● *Aerial, 2013*

“Explore the possibilities, be persistent, and don’t compare yourself to others – instead track your own improvement”

tricks and techniques, I’m finally having fun with the medium! I’ll definitely continue to practice and experiment with my work.

2da: If you could give emerging illustrators one piece of advice about working in the industry, what would it be?

AD: Draw every day, even if it’s just a little sketch. Figure out the strong aspects of your favorite art, as well as what you personally enjoy creating. Combine these inspirations, and your own voice will emerge. Explore the possibilities, be persistent, and don’t

compare yourself to others – instead track your own improvement. And never stop making lots of wonderful things (whatever that may mean to you)!

2da: Finally, what are your artistic goals and what can we expect to see from you in the future?

AD: While I do enjoy freelancing, I think my ultimate goal is making a living with personal art. Perhaps through gallery work, prints, or art books. If that’s attainable and where that would lead I have no idea! Thinking about what’s yet to come makes me anxious – in the best of ways. ●

PRO TIP

Take breaks!

Staring at the same image for hours on end can cause visual numbness. When I feel like I’m hitting a wall, I force myself to focus on another task. Keep in mind that your hands and eyes also need breaks (they’ll thank you later). A fresh perspective illuminates the stronger and weaker areas of a painting and I value those first few seconds of insight. Flipping the canvas horizontally is another method to change perspective. It can also be motivating to work on more than one piece, taking breaks between each.

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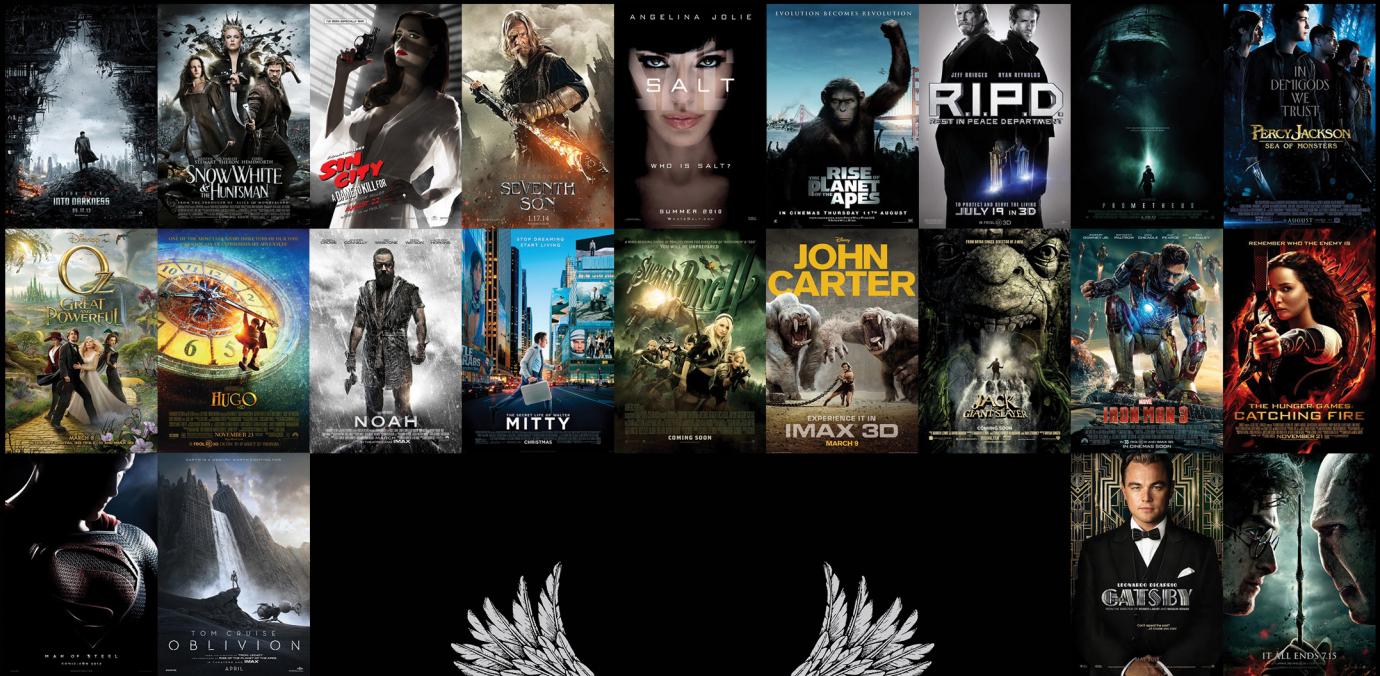
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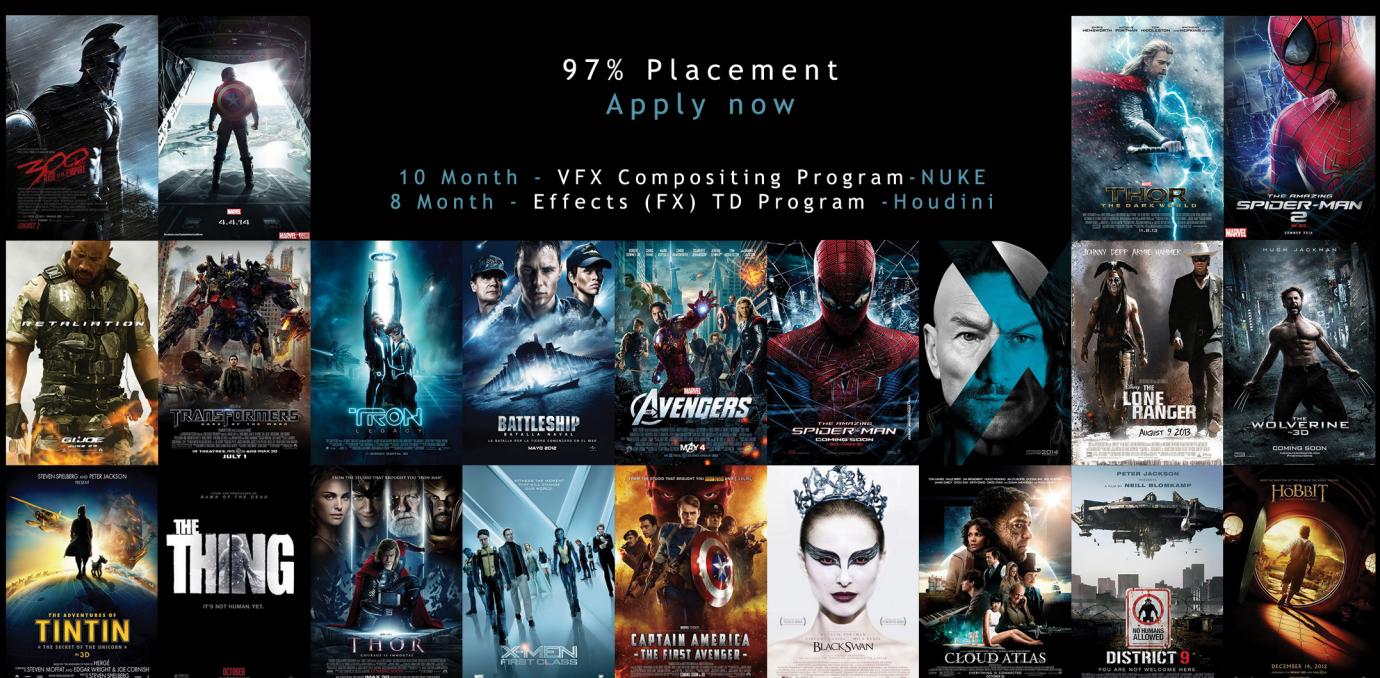
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A selection of our Alumni's achievements, congratulations to them all.

MICHAL KUS

Sketchbook

Concept artist and illustrator, Michal Kus, shares the pages of his sketchbook, revealing the different designs and variations of his sci-fi vehicles before they reach the final render.

The Artist



Michal Kus
kus-art.com

Michal Kus is a concept artist and illustrator based in Guildford working at EA Games. Currently he is responsible for designing and visualizing the environments, assets and props for Criterion's next new IP.

SKETCHBOOK OF MICHAL KUS

Browse through a selection of stunning sci-fi sketches by Michal Kus...

Games and drawing were always my two main passions since I was a young kid, so combining the two was quite easy – I did everything to become a concept artist in the videogame industry, which was not that easy. I do like challenges though. The key to breaking into the industry was discipline and facing concept art on all fronts in order to become a versatile asset. Although versatile, my biggest love is vehicle/hardware design; trying to come up with new shapes and forms, and being able to present them in a tight artistic style.

Design-wise, I focus on a fresh look and coming up with new things. Mixing elements inspired by places out of this world, while keeping it recognizable, is a challenge – improvement on that will never stop.

My personal key to success is that I sketch around before I start on the final design. I think it is very important for an individual to break through a certain confidence level and switch your mind set from 'pretty drawings' to 'exploring a design.' Exploring a design involves research and sketching. You have to train your brain and sketch your own way to boost your confidence and creativity. Long story short, personally I think your first sketch will never be as good as your tenth. That is why I sketch.

Inspiration and ideas

Inspiration is all around us. Our own planet we live on provides me, as a concept artist, with an unlimited amount of inspiration. My only advice is that when you start being an observer of the world around you, paying attention to everything will open up a new world for you. It instantly triggers the urge to create something new. Sketch out a new design based on some cool stuff you saw in the morning or the way the sunlight was bouncing from a certain object. Other than that I recommend a lot of books and movies, but that list would be too big.

Materials

Most of the time I sketch and doodle digitally on my Wacom Intuos 4, it is fast and efficient, and it also provides me the possibility to reuse certain forms I sketched before. I do sketch traditionally once in a while, but that is when I don't have access to digital media.

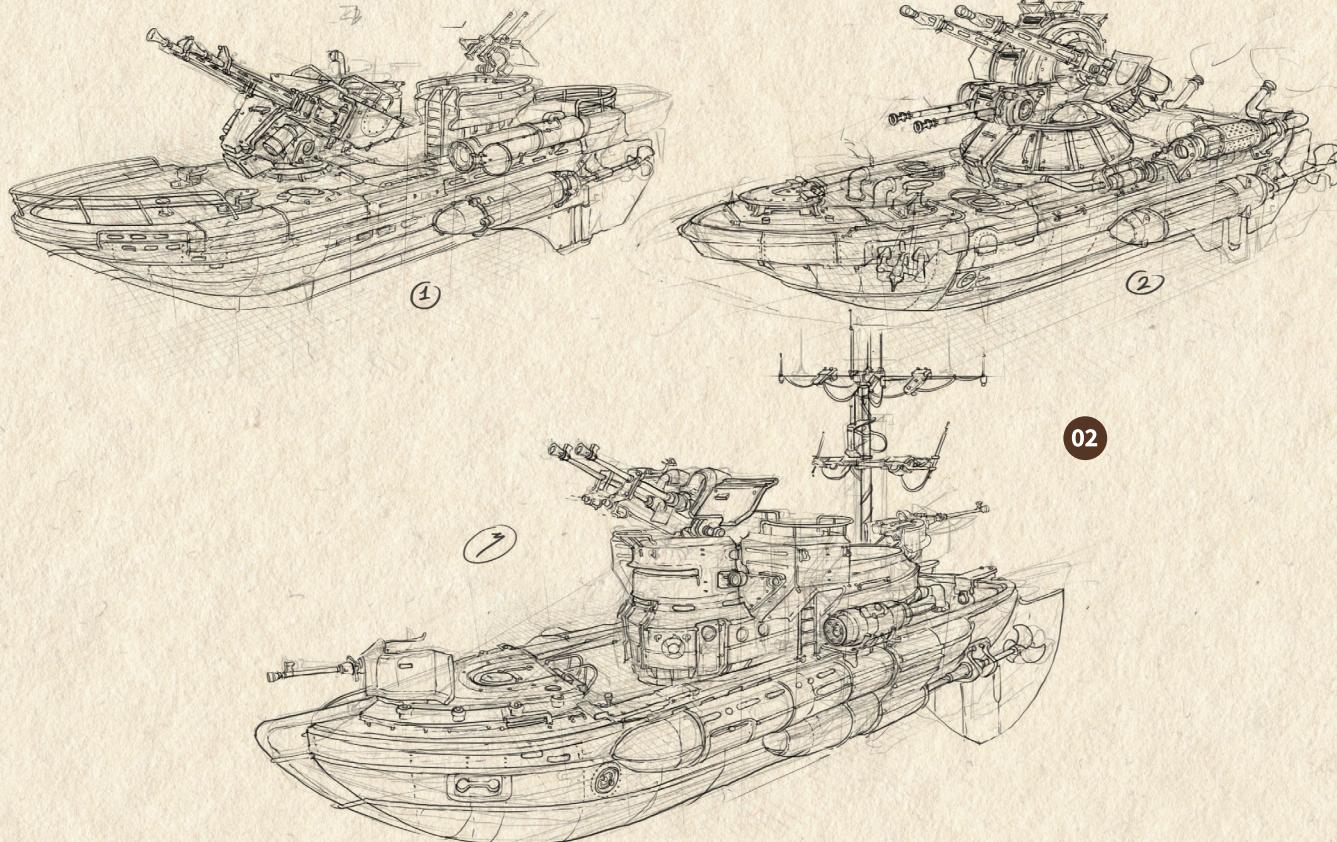


PRO TIP

Build up a visual library

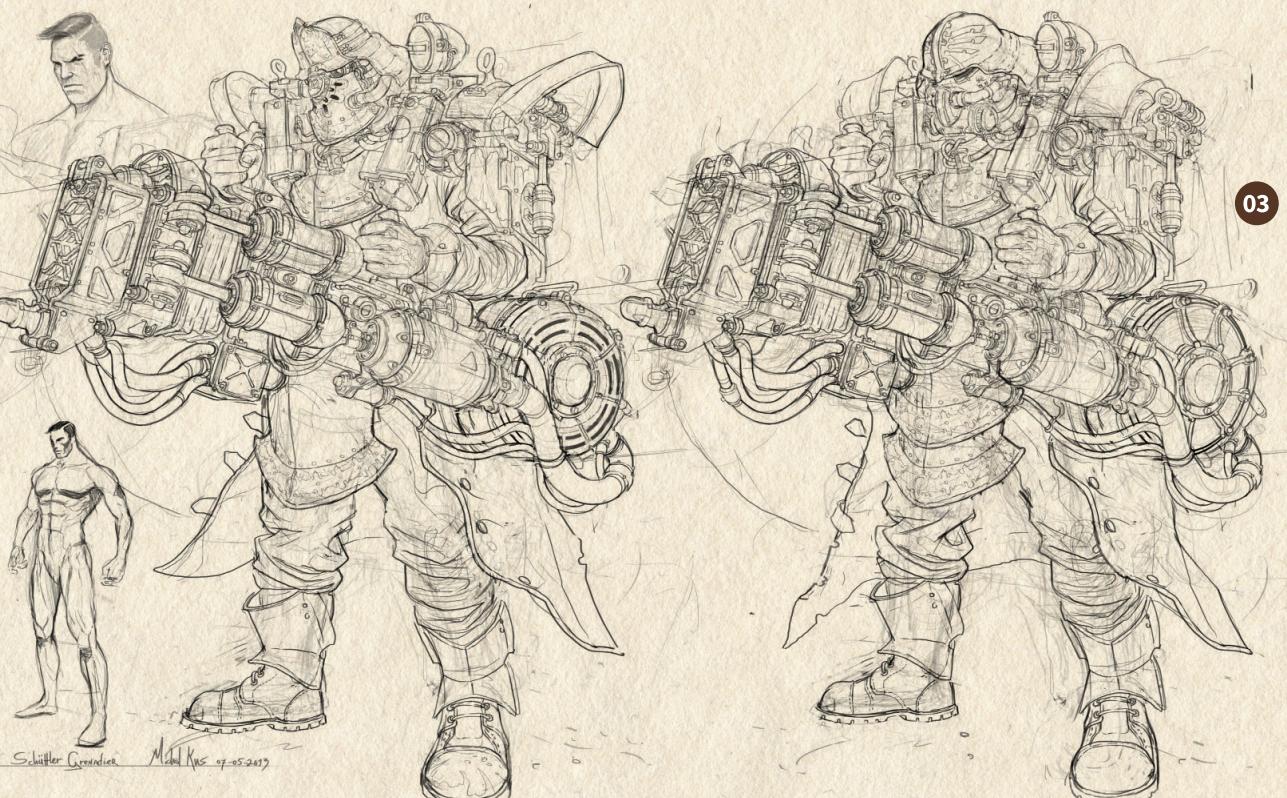
This is also one of the key elements in order to be a concept designer, even if you want to do it as a hobby. Personally, I think your visual library comes in two parts. Over the years you gather images from the internet, scan pictures from books and make your own photos. All of this takes time on its own and forms the physical part of your visual library. The second part is the more active and mental part. With time, as you draw from your reference material, you fill your brain with all these visual resources. A visual library in your head is the key to making sketches fast. See it as your own empire you build up with time, constantly training your brain to play around and be creative with shapes.

01



Alternate WW2: Air tank. Rough Michel Kas 09.05.2013

ISOTX © 2000-2013



Alternate Schützen Grenadier Michel Kas 09.05.2013

01 Character sketches done for my project, 'Project Verdas.' Set in a future Asia where India became an empire once again. Sketches depict ideas of how people trade the body parts in order to pursue their artisan profession. With this they also extend their lifetime. Personal work.

02 Exploration of a skirmish boat for a European faction during an alternate setting of WW2. Here I am trying to keep the design cliché to make it look like a believable WW2 era boat, yet some elements are made up. This creates a nice mix. ISOTX © 2000-2013

03 Exploration of a heavy infantry unit with a sonic wave anti-tank weapon. Mixing obvious World War 2 German uniform elements, while coming up with interesting shapes, was a challenge before I started the final presentation. ISOTX © 2000-2013



Planet Cold Gliese (during the warm era)

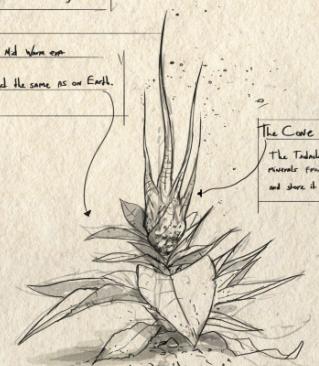


Plant Example on Cold Gliese

Endothermic cycle between the warm and cold areas on Gliese

① Mid Warm era

The leaves not the same as on Earth.



The Core

The Thalakos absorbs minerals from the soil and stores it in its Core

More Flora



①



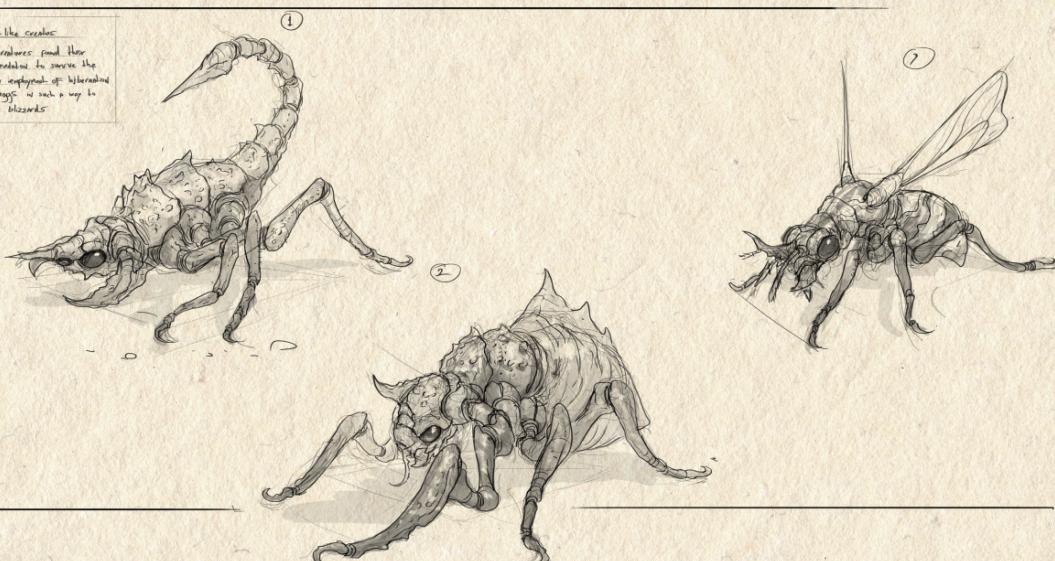
②



③

Cold Gliese Warm Era sketches Michał Kus 07-01-2014

Various weird life creatures found. How they struggle to survive the cold era's by hibernation or laying eggs is such a way to survive the blizzards



04 Exploring a planet with a warm and cold cycle caused by frequent global volcanic activity. This sheet shows some flora and fauna as well as some landscape sketches of how the planet looks during the warm period. Personal work.

(2) End of the warm Era
The rapid change to cold is no problem as all of the minerals start to be processed to serve as fuel up here during the cold era

(3) Cold Era

The Cone is covered by a layer of all kinds of minerals to insulate it from the Cone. The rest of the minerals are used inside to keep the plant alive in warmth

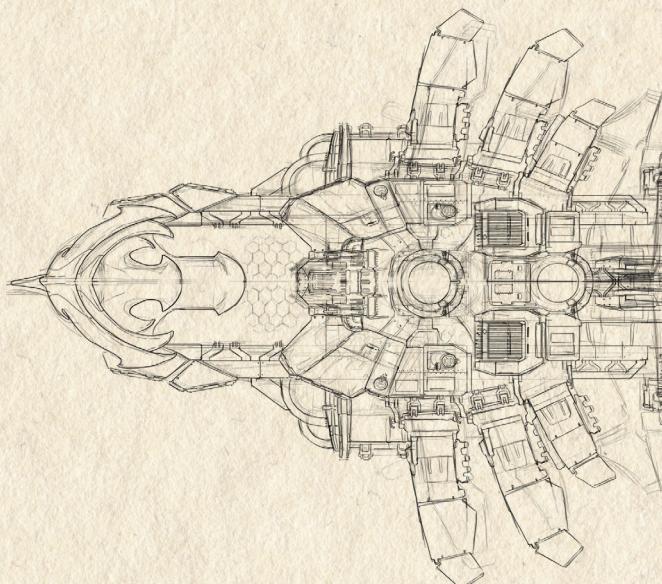
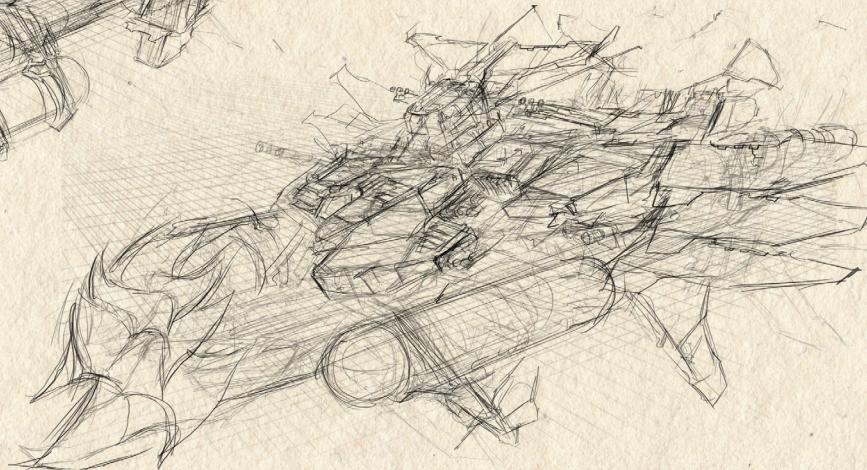


(1) Start of the Warm Era

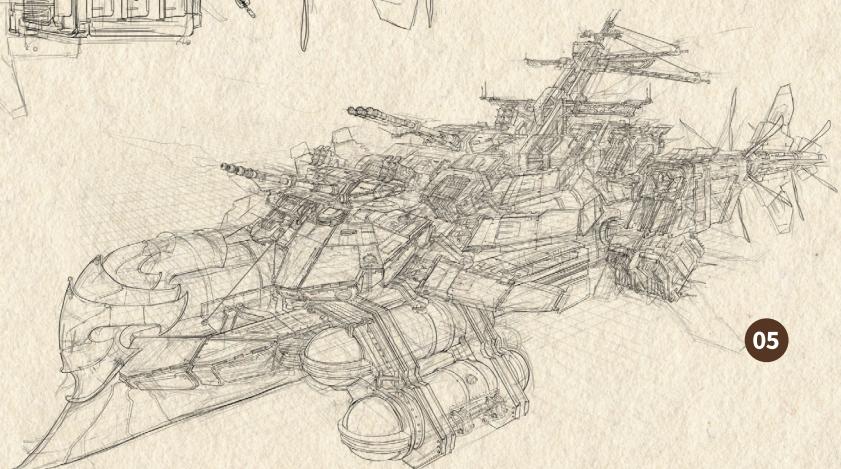
The mineral layer breaks up sudden temperature change while a new plant arises from its



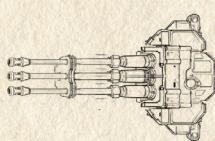
04



Defined Line drawing + Top view



2-X 240 mm Triple barrel



Heavy Airship Final Michał Kuc 20-09-2012

05

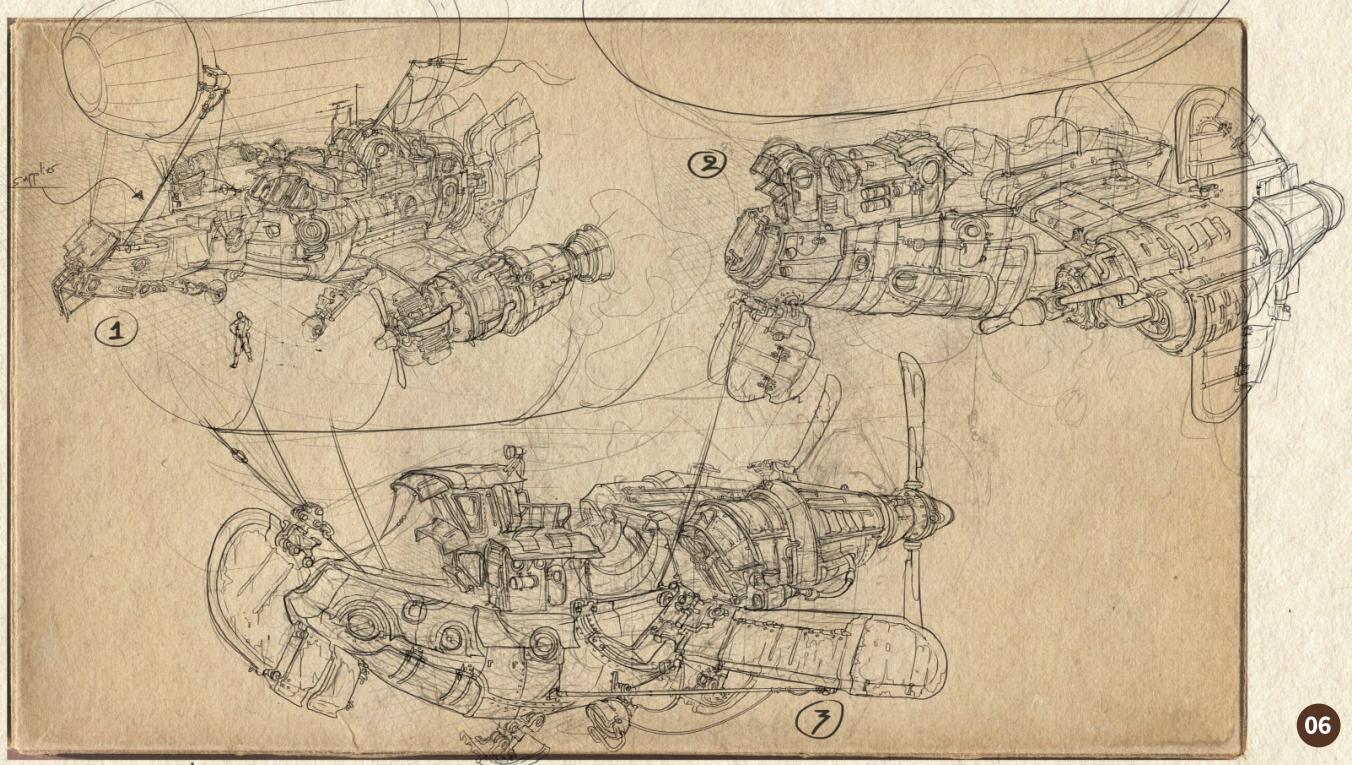
⚡ PRO TIPS

Being creative is a prescription

Personally I think creativity is the most important artistic aspect. Sketch a lot and your flow of creativeness will turn into something that is a part of you. It is vital you train your brain to see forms out of this world and rearrange them. That is basically what creativeness is. The challenging part is to pick up and see the forms from our world and arrange them in a cooler way then execute it professionally by drawing with confidence. Sketch a lot and your brain will adapt to it.

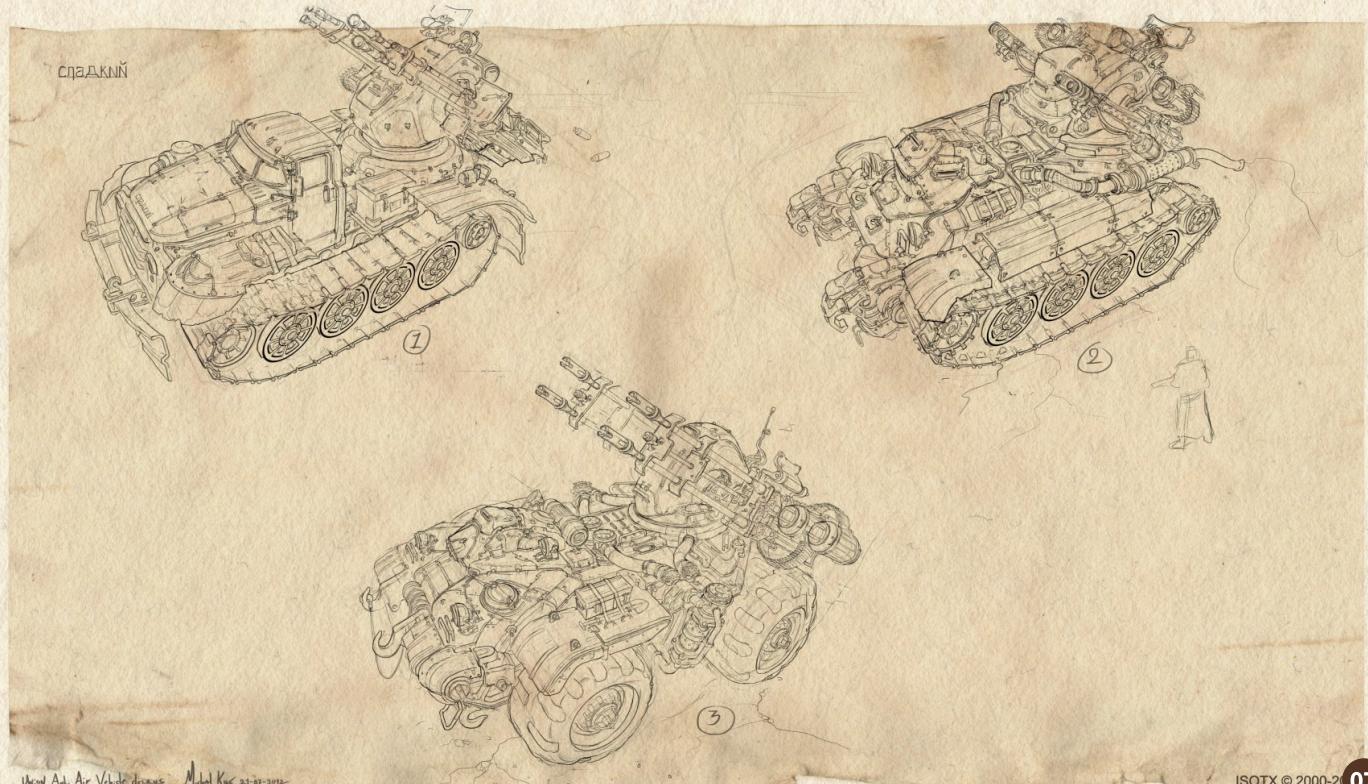
Get inspired to inspire others

Inspiration comes from this world and everything we know. As a concept artist we are in this loop of recycling elements and rearranging them in a new creative way. You are basically an inspiration refinery, taking elements and parts based on research you did, everything that can be found and seen in our world and what you give in return is your own creative vision.



Civilian Supply Airship designs M. Luk 23-02-2013

ISOTX © 2000-2013



Heavy Air Vehicle designs M. Luk 23-02-2013

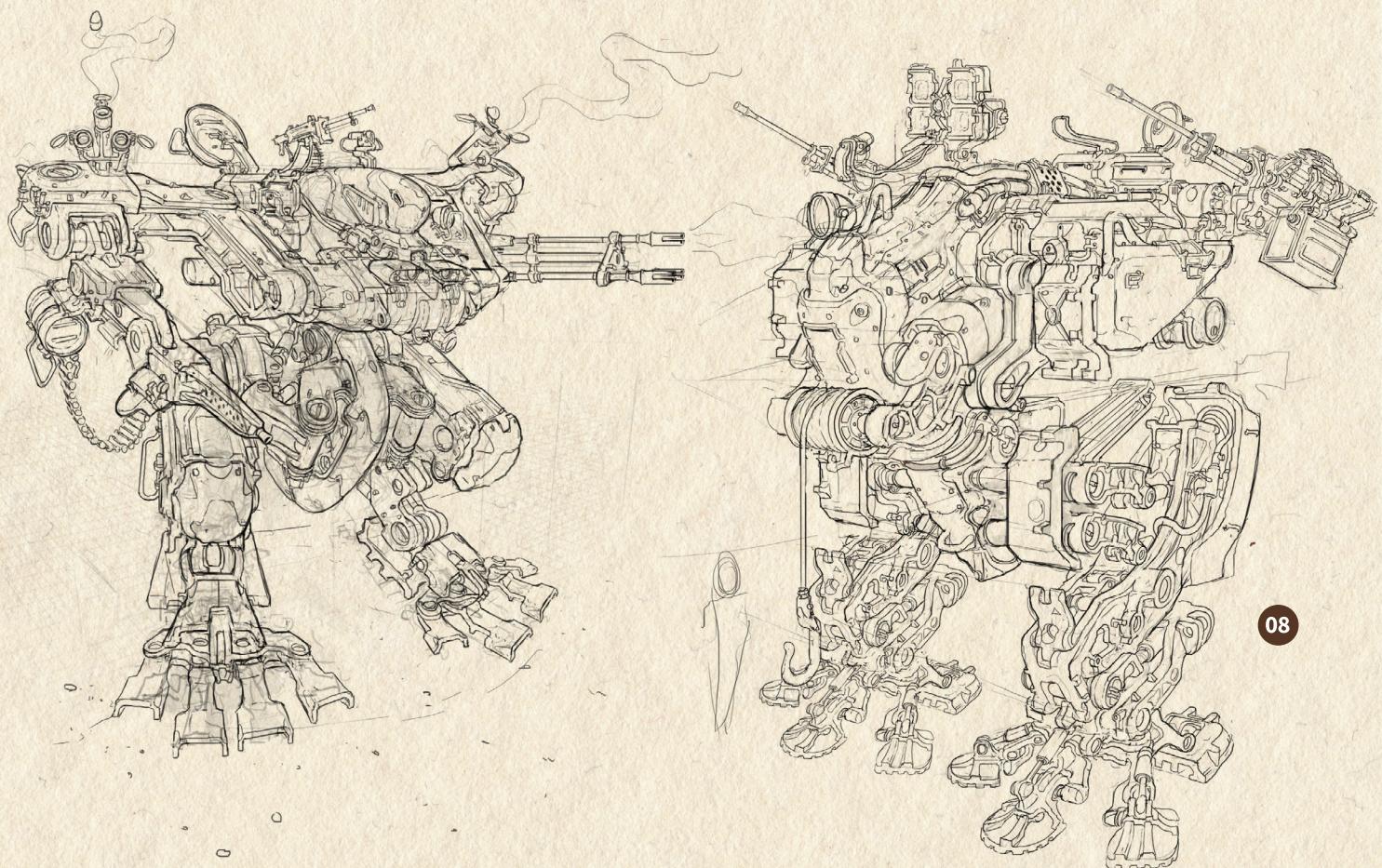
ISOTX © 2000-2013

05 Exploration of a heavy air warship. Set in the alternate setting of WW2. For its time this is the pinnacle and definition of a true battle fortress. I was inspired by warships from WW2. Here you see some of the fast and loose line drawings before I made the tighter final drawing. ISOTX © 2000-2013

06 I was trying to be a little crazy with the forms. Even though all of these sketches have some crazy major forms going on, the micro elements are believable and holds up the believability. ISOTX © 2000-2013

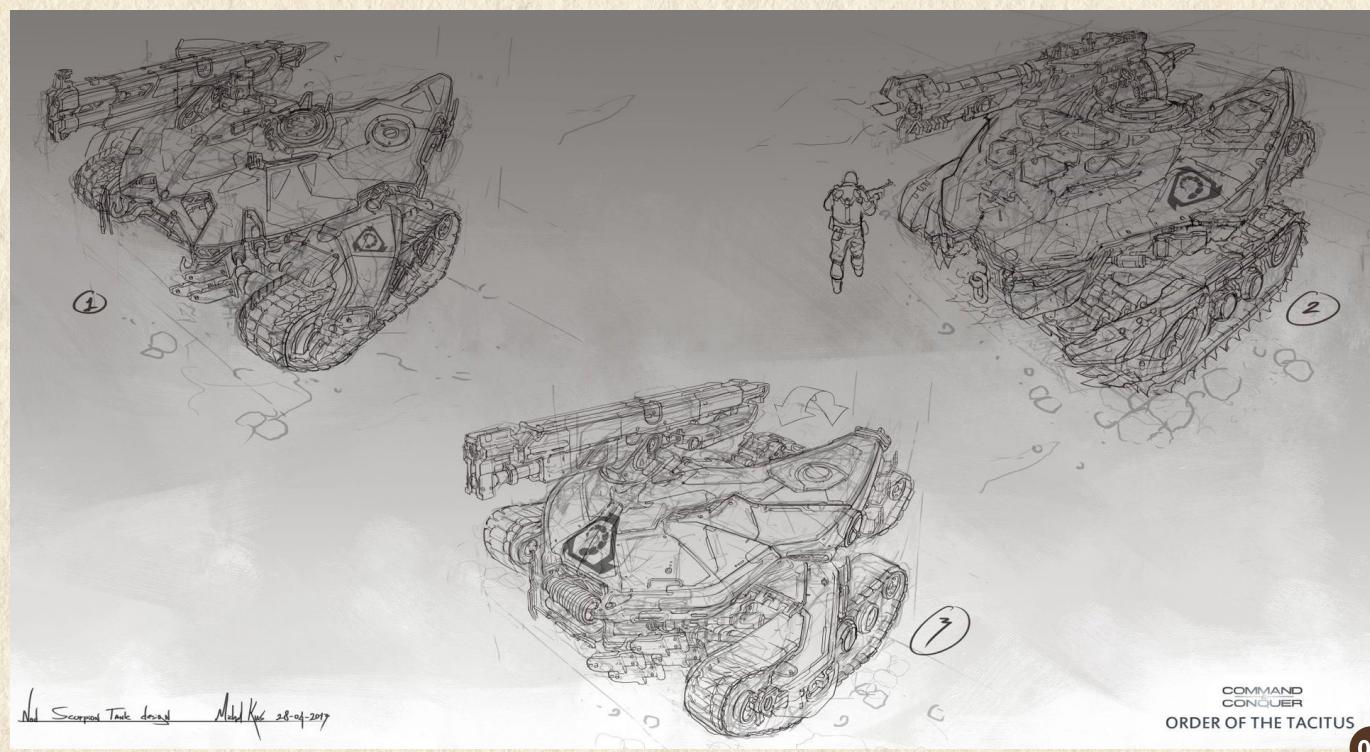
07 The same WW2-like project but done for the Soviet faction. These are three sketches of an anti-aircraft vehicle. Its purpose is the same; however I wanted to have this nice contrast in its appearance. So here we see a truck, a tank and a tractor set up for the same purpose. This is always one of the biggest challenges when doing a lot of variations for a design with the same purpose. ISOTX © 2000-2013

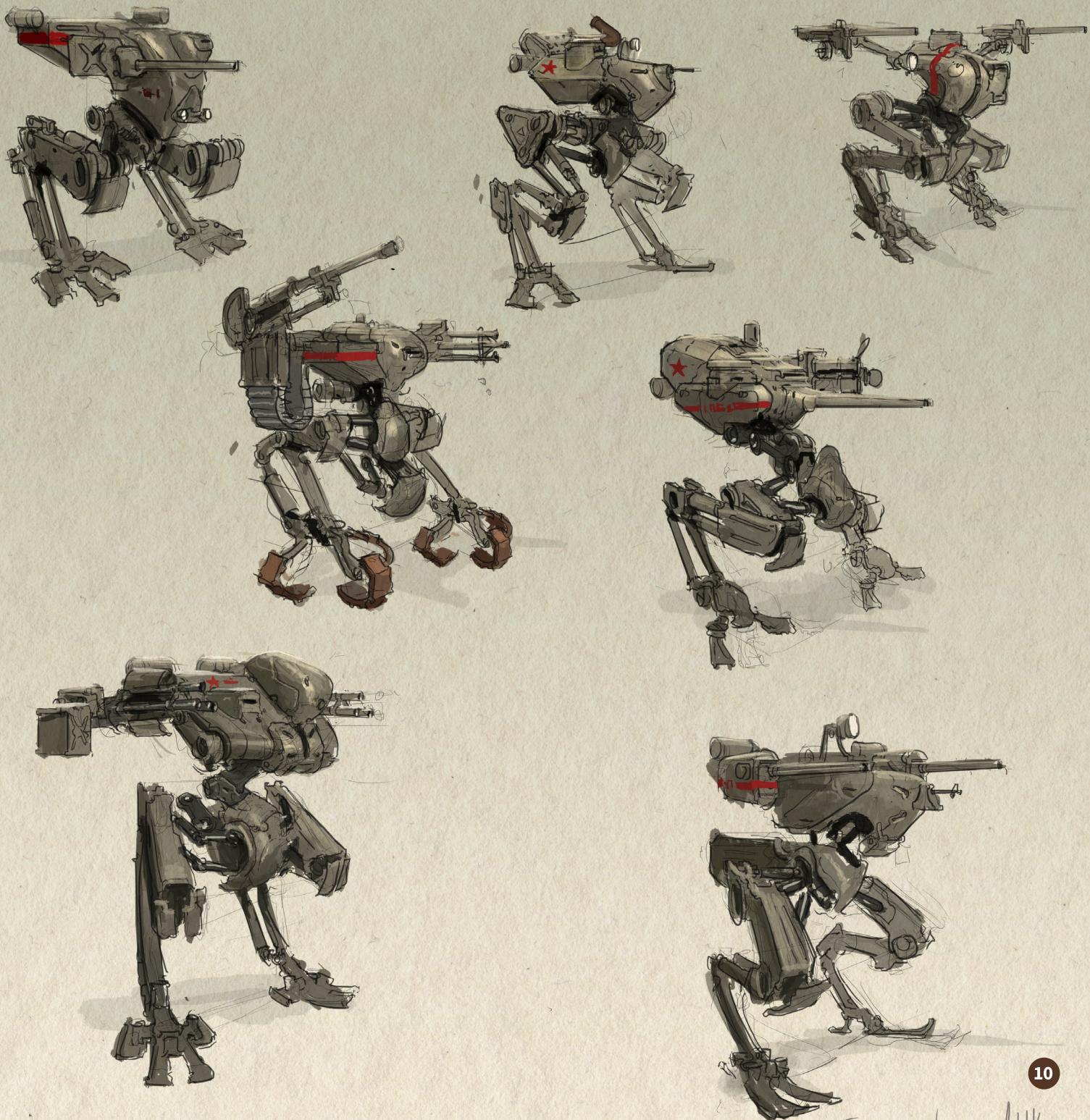
SKETCHBOOK OF MICHAŁ KUS



C.C.C.P  -1952-

Scorched Mech design - dev. 11.07.2014



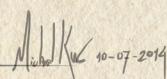


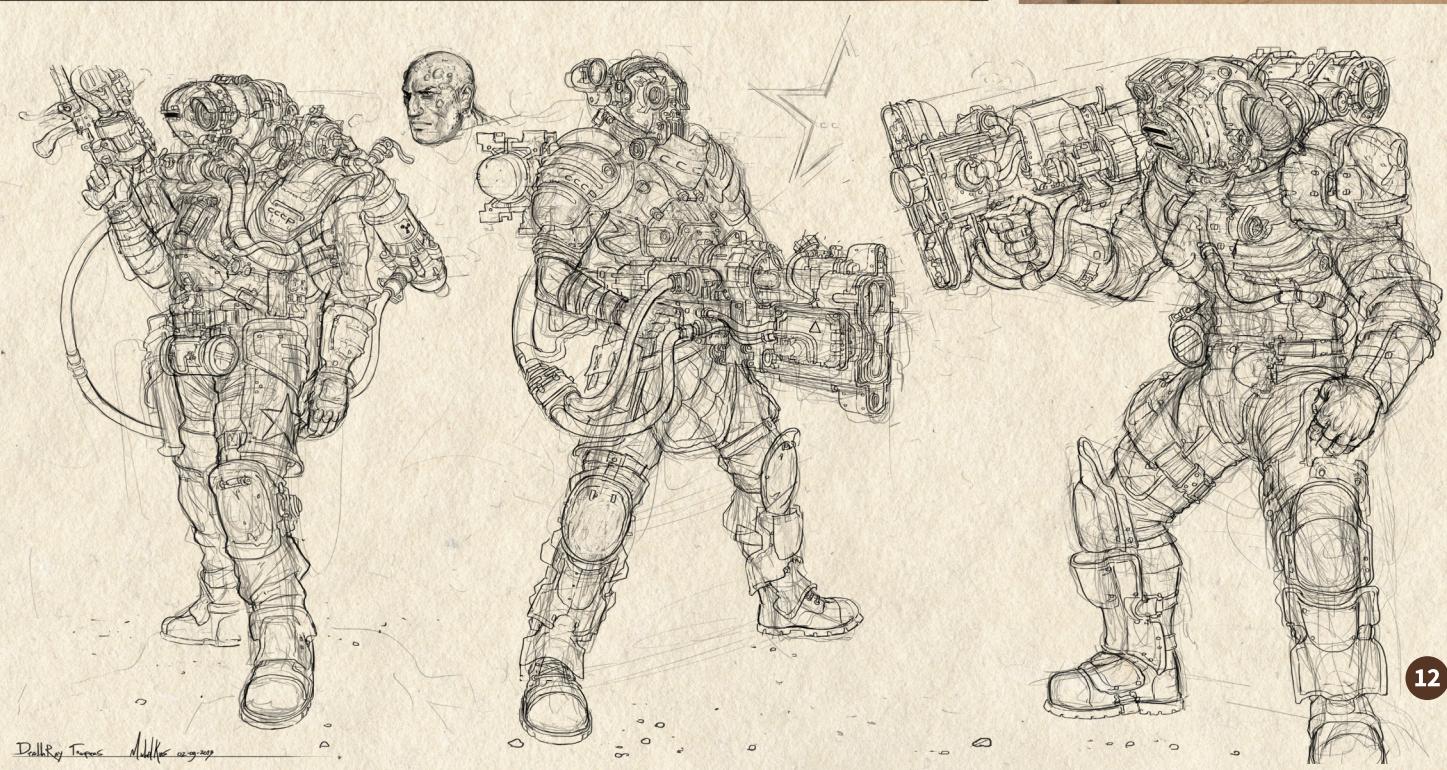
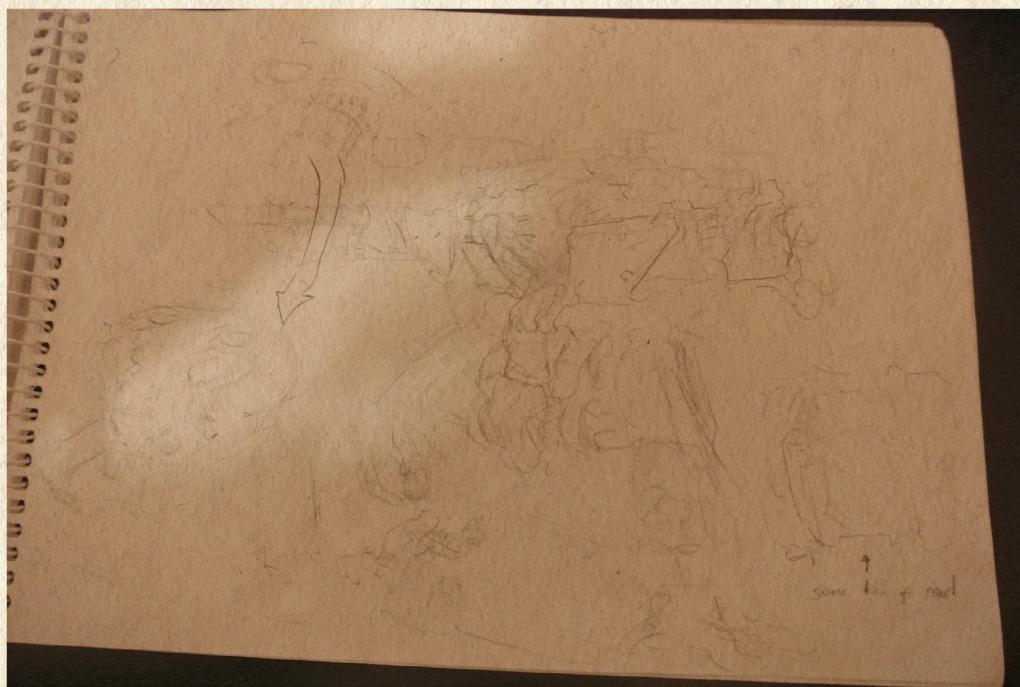
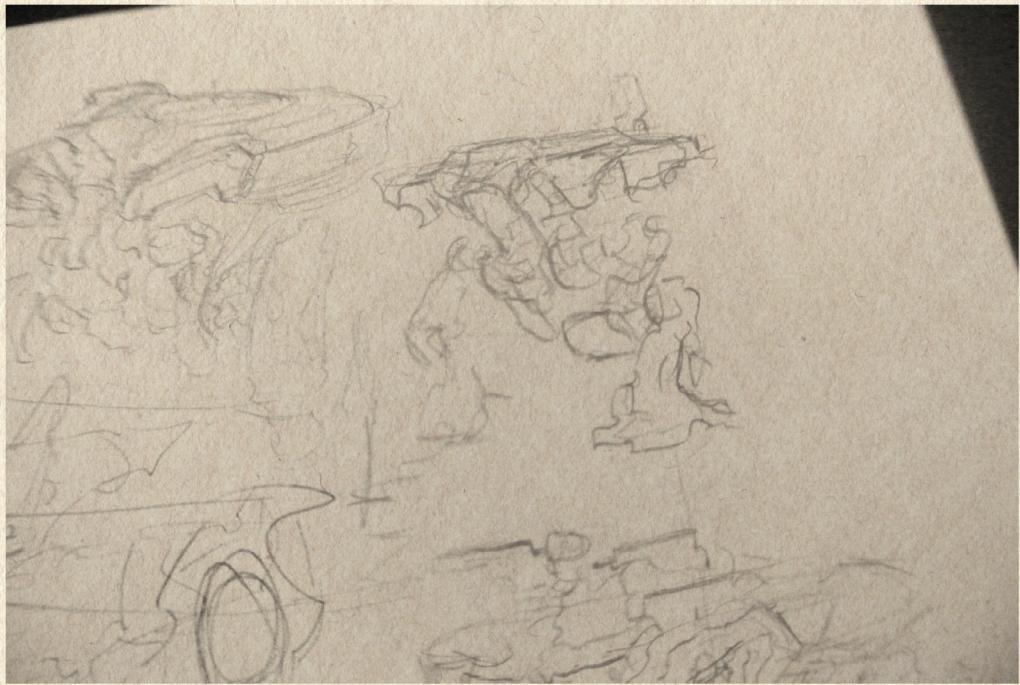
08 Personal designs, done for my tutorial which can be found on Gumroad (www.gumroad.com/michalkus). Here I am covering how to come up with new forms and shapes while keeping it in a post-WW2 setting. Personal work.

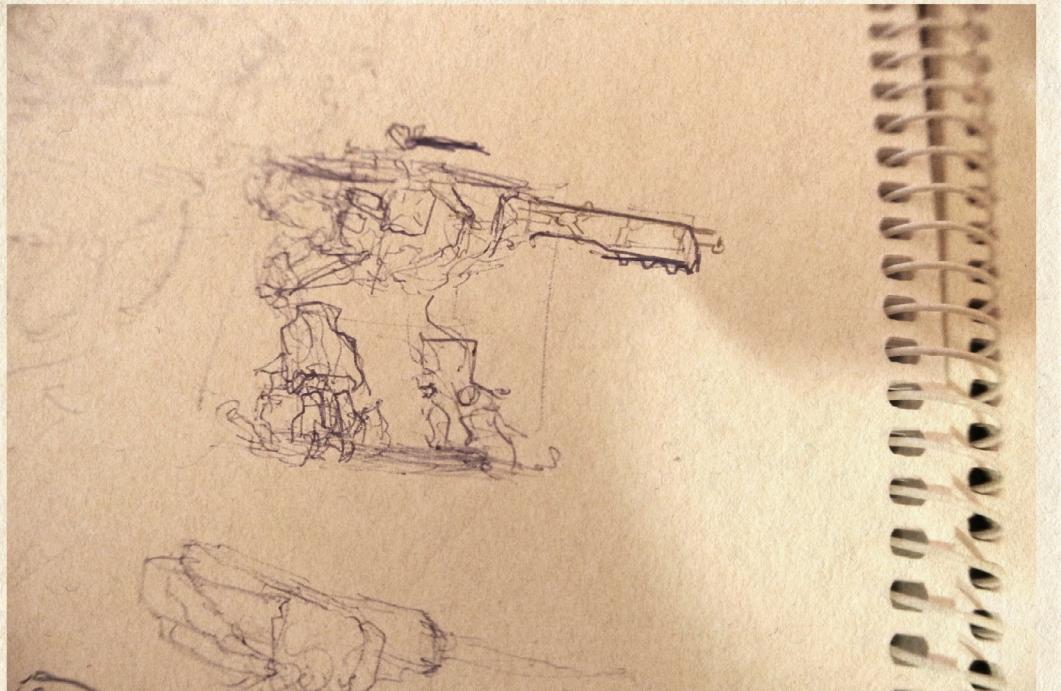
09 Sketches of a next-generation light tank.

10 More personal designs, done for my Gumroad tutorial. Here I am exploring and getting into the zone of the design language I am about to use for my final designs. Doodling like this warms up the brain. Personal work.

10

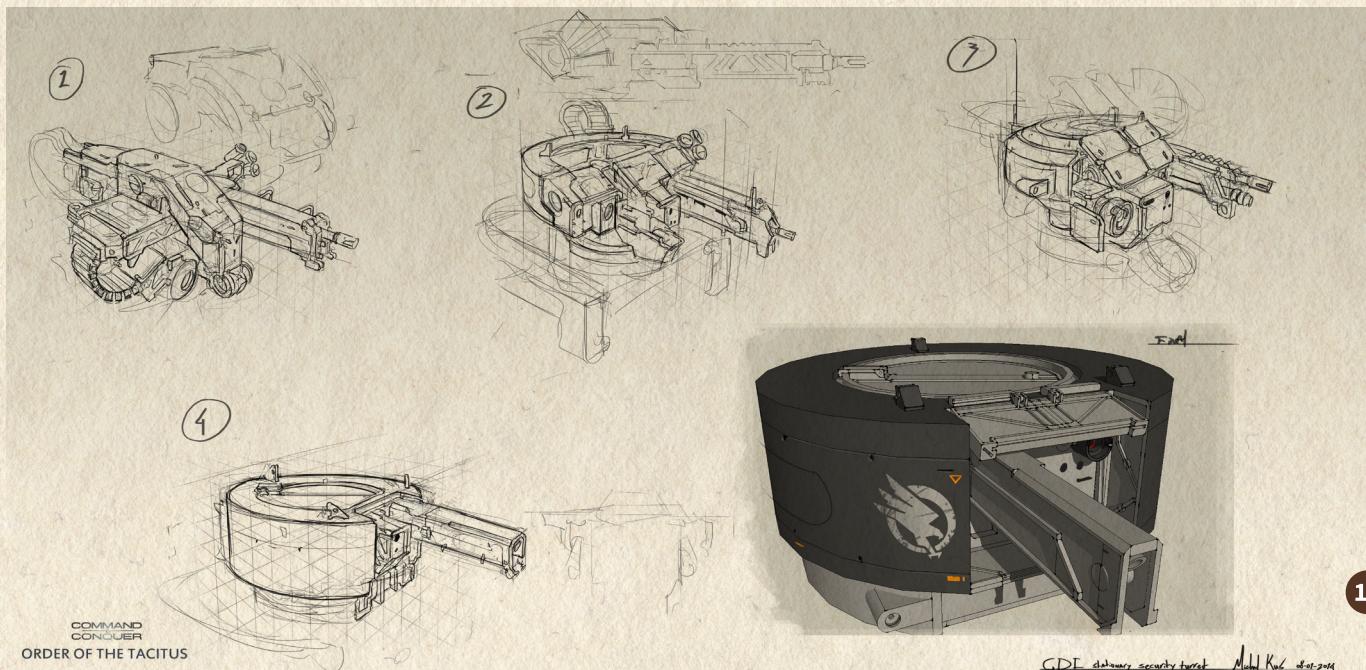
Soviet mech designs  10-07-2014





11

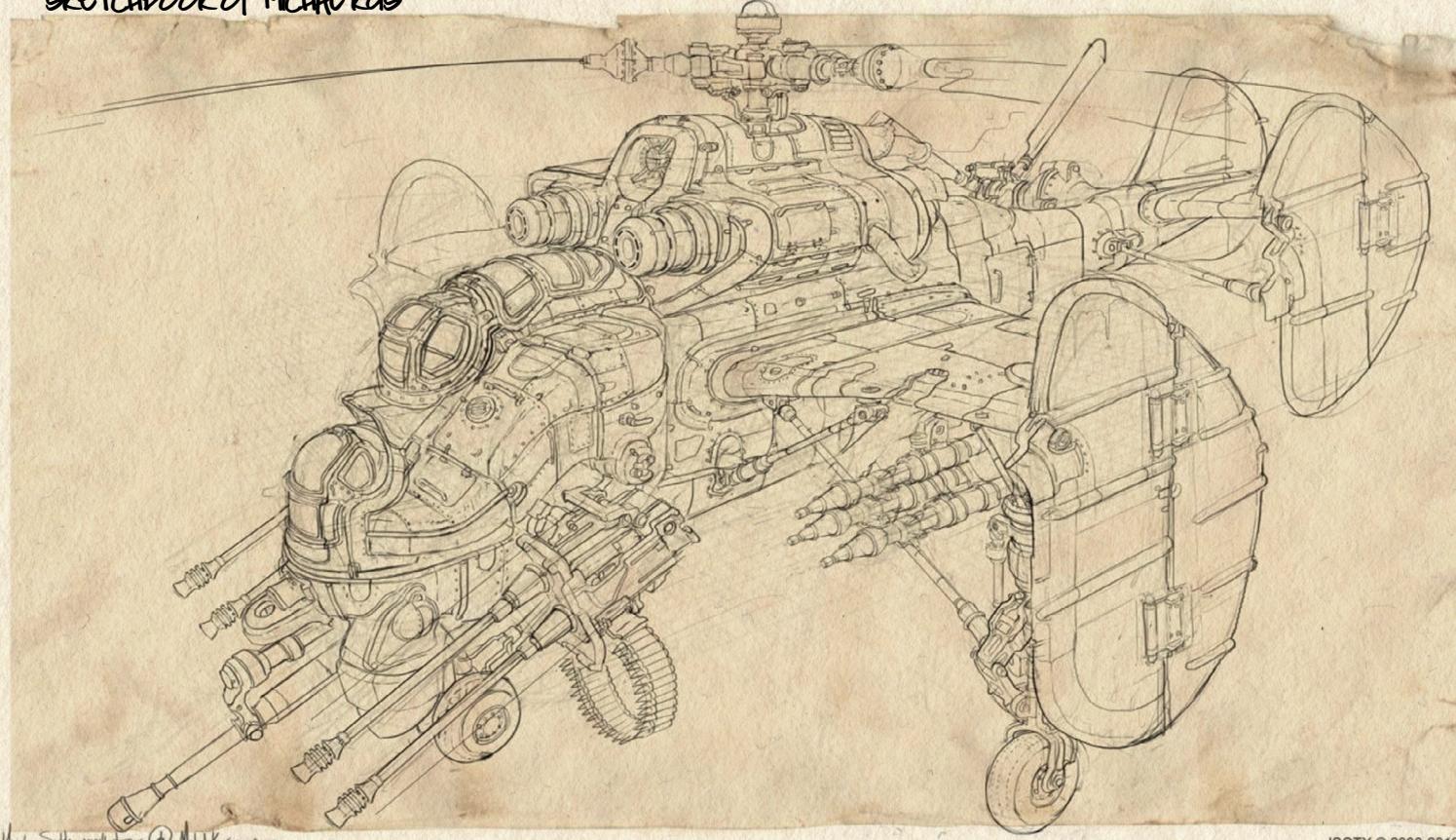
Sci-Fi Mech Doodles Michael Kuc 37-3-2014



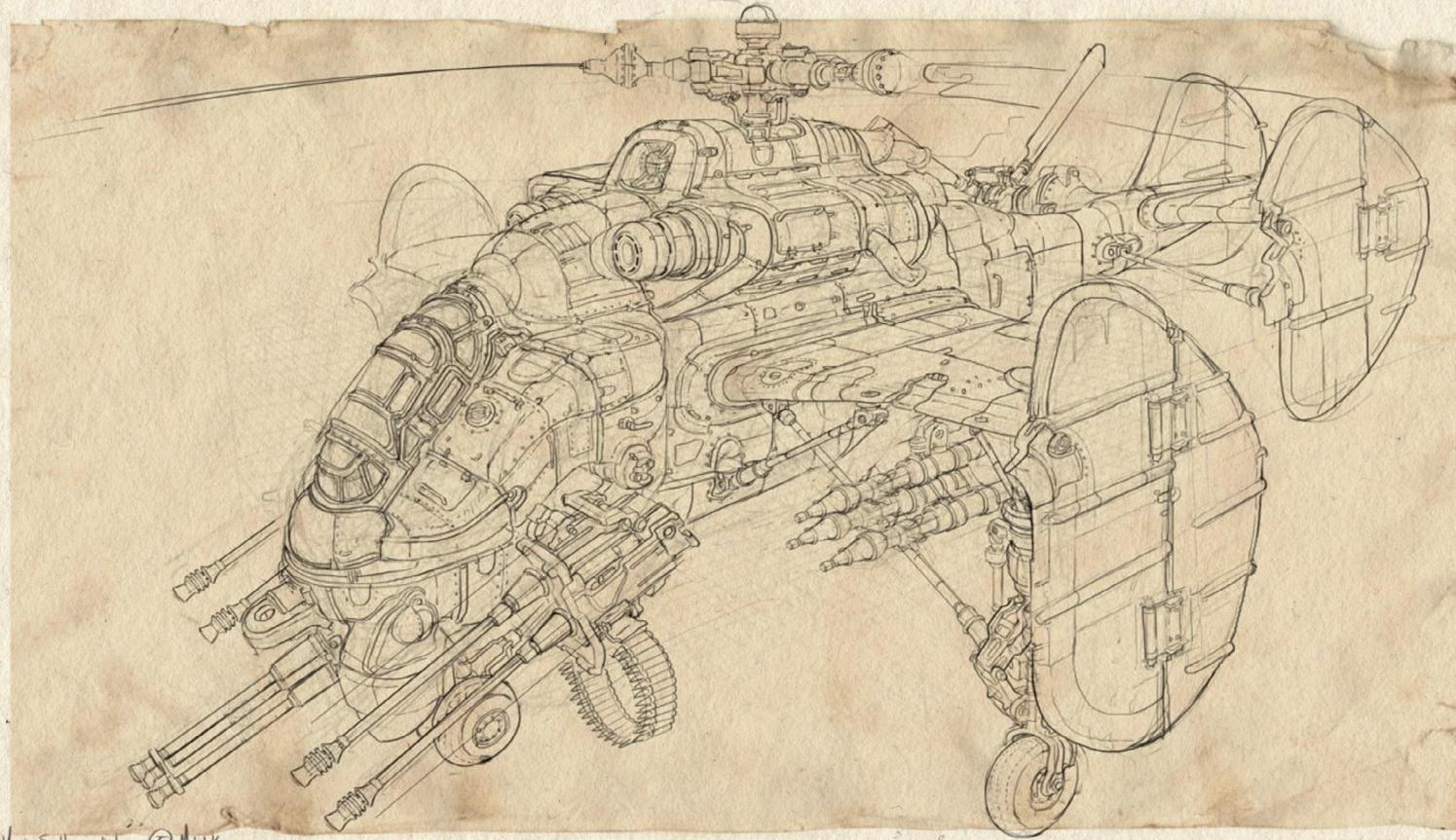
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13

GDI stationary security turret Michael Kuc 4-8-2014



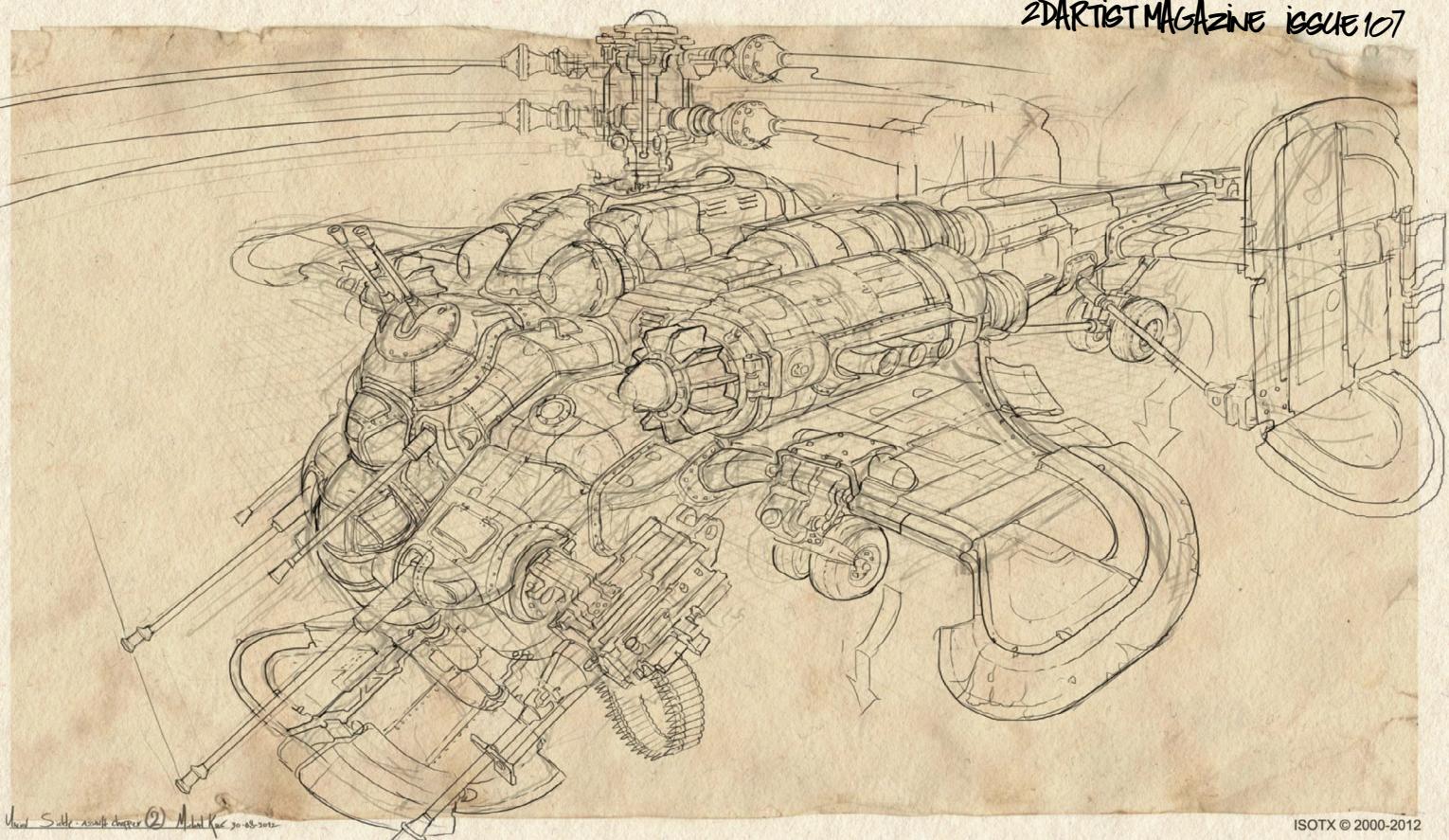
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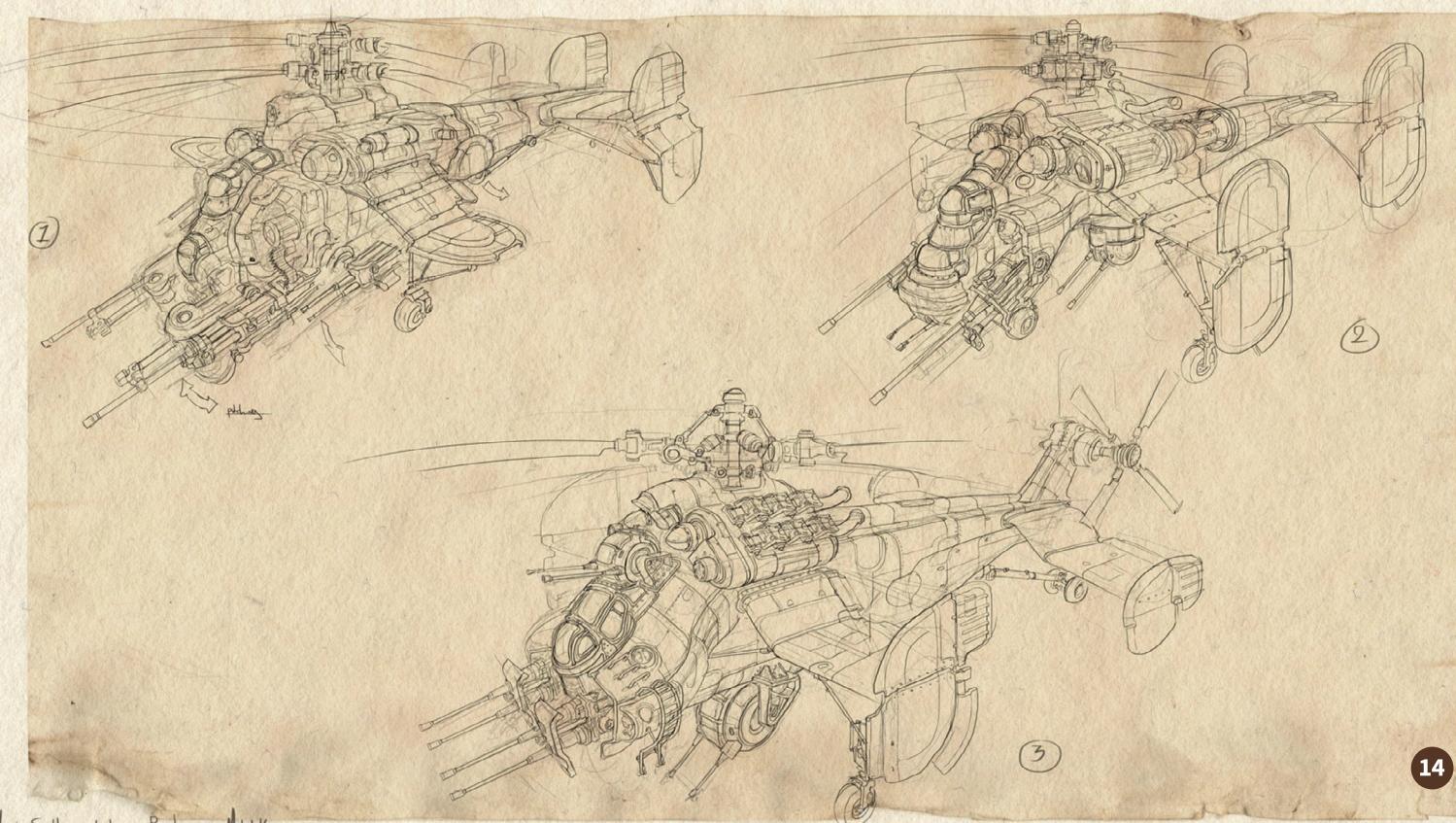
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11 Since I spoke about exploring and warming up prior to making a better defined design, I would also like to show these doodles as well. These are not to be presented to a client; these are to help to trigger my mental state in order to enter the zone of designing sci-fi objects. Personal work.

12 Personal work



ISOTX © 2000-2012



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13 Exploring a design for a versatile security turret. Well armored and reasonable fire power. I was trying to keep the major shapes simple and chunky. Personal work.

14 The alternate WW2 setting I was working on took place in a world where the war waged longer than in the real world. WW2 boosted our technology overall. What if the Second World War took longer than 10 years? I think personally it is quite possible choppers would be around late 1940s, early 50s, and actually make it into mass production.

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Secret Society of Souptown

Aleksander Rostov

Year created: 2012

Web: rostov.carbonmade.com

© Nafta Films OÜ





Stained Glass

Michał Lisowski

Year created: 2014

Web: michallisowski.com







HorseBack

Christian Bravery

Year created: 2014

Web: leadinglightdesign.com

© C. Bravery 2014







Eastern Goddess

Ali Kiani Amin

Year created: 2011

Web: facebook.com/ali.kianiamin

2011 A handwritten signature in red ink, consisting of the year '2011' followed by a stylized, flowing signature that appears to be the artist's name.



Red Velvet Dress

Eren Arik

Year created: 2014

Web: erenarik.artstation.com

© Metal Weave Games



EREN ARIK 14



Sunset in the Slums

Rostislav Zagornov

Year created: 2014

Web: artstation.com/artist/Attemme







Dragon Skull

Yuri Shwedoff

Year created: 2014

Web: artstation.com/artist/yurishwedoff





YURI
SHWE
DOFF



New Atlantis

Bastien Grivet

Year created: 2014

Web: grivetart.com





Carnivorous

Carolin Vogt

Year created: 2013

Web: carolinvogt.com

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Final Battle

Grzegorz Rutkowski

Year created: 2013

Web: 88grzes.deviantart.com

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2dartist.

Issue 107 | November 2014

107
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40
pages of
expert
advice

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Design a desert vehicle

Improve your concept car designs with Ignacio Bazán Lazcano's expert tips!

The secret to ethereal masterpieces

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Design a desert vehicle

Ignacio Bazán Lazcano demonstrates how to design and paint a dynamic desert vehicle in Photoshop. From creating thumbnails, and getting your perspective correct, to painting in volumes and achieving the right color balance, Ignacio reveals his techniques to create your own stunning vehicle concepts 

The Artist



Ignacio Bazán Lazcano
neisbeis.deviantart.com

Software Used:
Photoshop

Ignacio Bazán Lazcano has 10 years of experience working in the entertainment industry, with more than 6 years of experience doing concept art for videogames. He is currently working in a studio involved in a fun project.



Create your own concept car with Ignacio Bazán Lazcano's pro techniques...

This step-by-step tutorial will cover the design of a desert vehicle/buggy using Photoshop, from the early concept sketches to a final rendered illustration. The idea is that the vehicle should look usable in the real world, but have a post-apocalyptic style.

To begin with and to be able to visualize the desert buggy idea, I made sketches of various concepts and designs to reach the final one. I was inspired by several films to choose the range of colors and designs: *Elysium*, *Mad Max*, and *The Book of Eli*.

When selling an idea, it is useful to use images as support or as an example of what we are selling. The more detailed and striking are the images, the better the outcome is.

Almost every time I need to create a design I make quick sketches to get an image that inspires me to create the final image. I usually do between four and six quick sketches, because with only a few sketches I can get an inspiring image. I usually look for shapes and silhouettes that suggest balance and would serve as inspiration.

Now I'll show you how to work a sketch using lines and silhouettes. You can use both methods combined.

01 **Idea generation: Option 1:** To work with shapes or silhouettes I use the Lasso tool to draw with, as if it were a common pencil. As I try to create a buggy, with the Lasso tool, I draw the shape of the wheels and at the same time suggest the other elements over them (the cockpit, cannon, fenders, and so on).

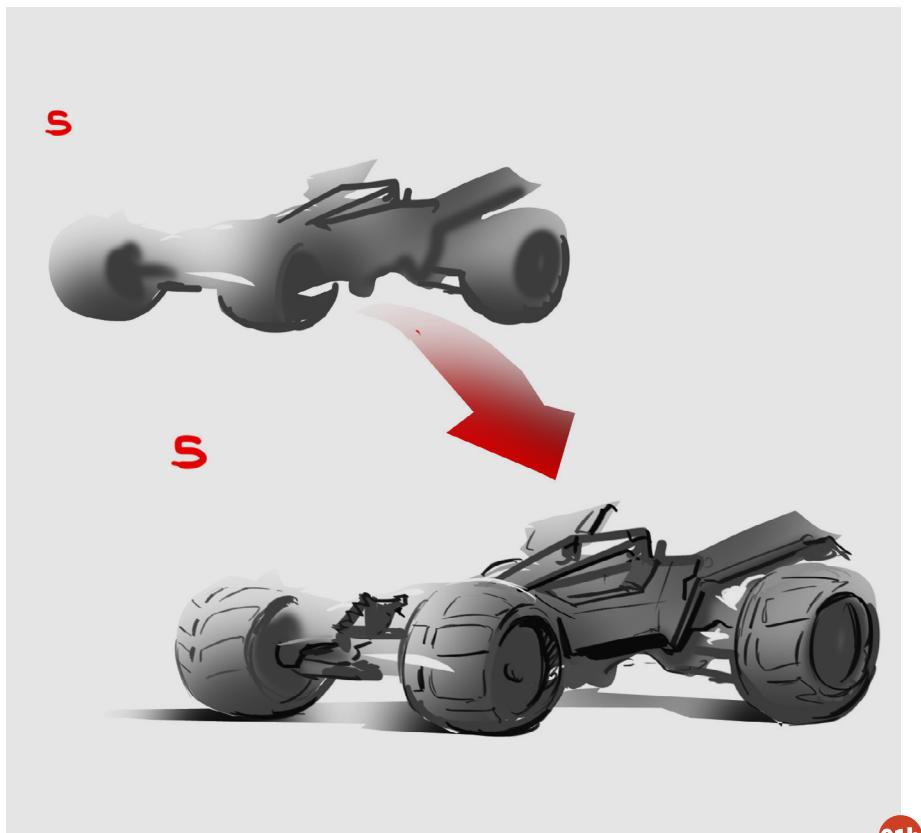
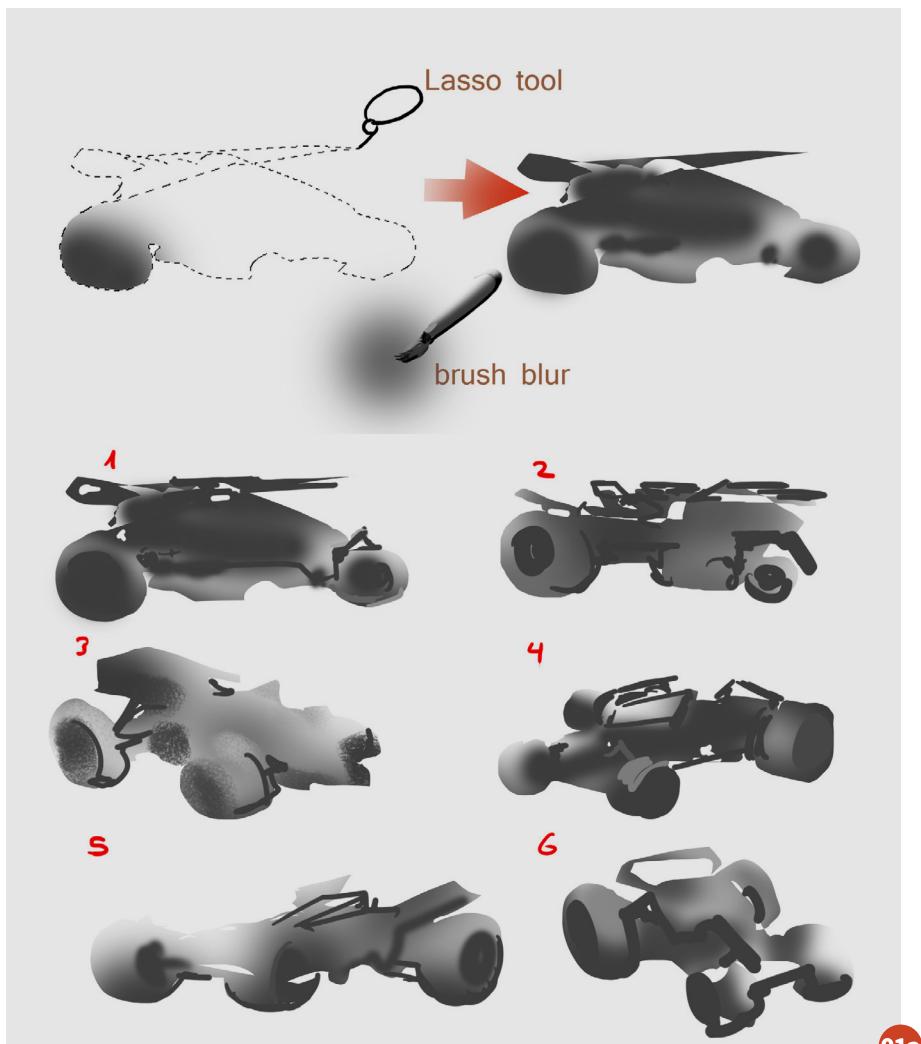
01a Ignacio uses the Lasso tool to create a range of silhouette thumbnails

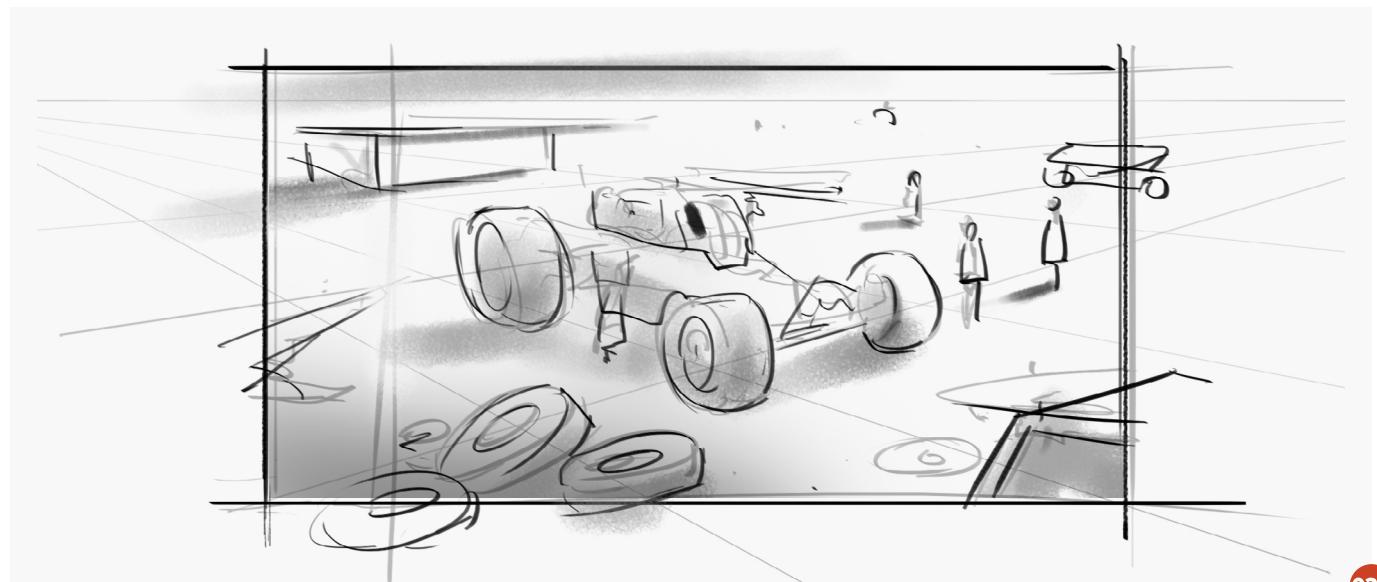
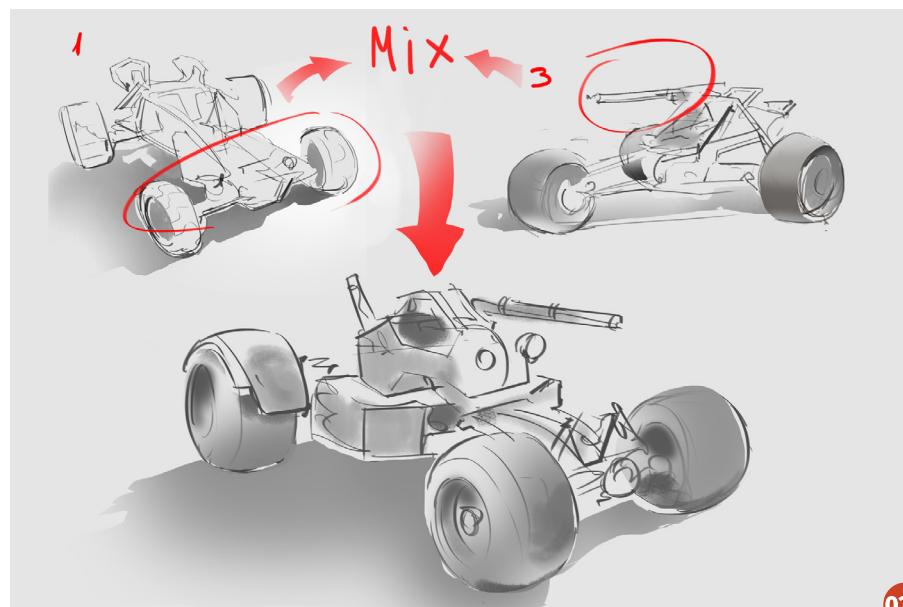
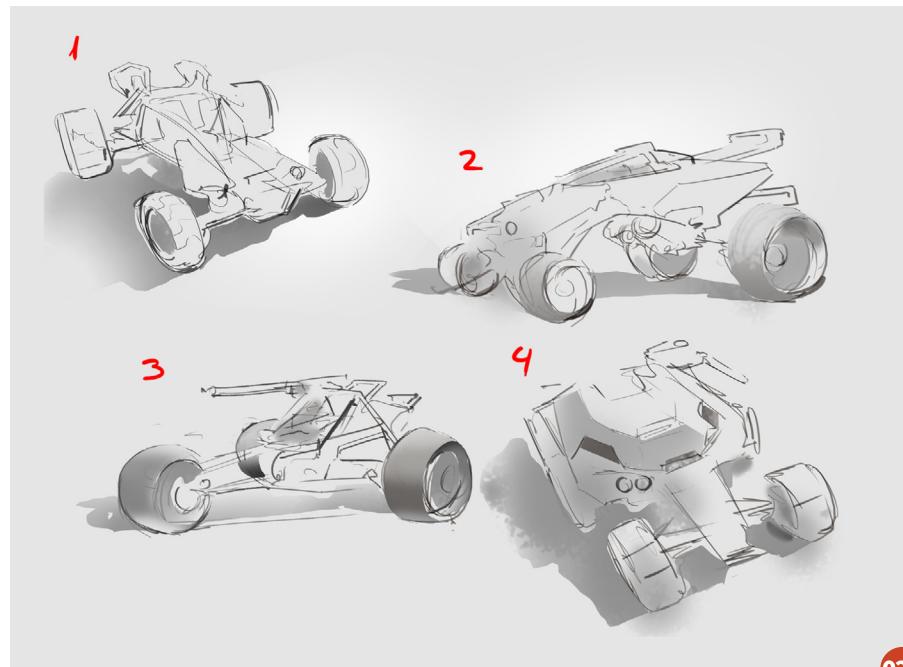
01b To get a better idea of the design, he lays down some simple lines and volume

02a Generating ideas through sketches creates a more finalized design

02b You can cut and paste elements from your sketches to create a final sketch

03a Ignacio makes a quick sketch of the whole scene





Now that I have a few silhouettes, to get a better idea, I give some volume to the parts that I want to highlight. Using a brush with a soft tip, I illuminate the main areas to give a little more information to the silhouette. Finally, I use a Hard brush to define the key parts of the design with suggestive lines.

02 Idea generation – Option 2: You can also create sketches from lines, looking for basic geometric shapes until you reach a balanced sketch. This is the traditional way to get an idea. Generally, I usually work with silhouettes when I need to generate many concepts quickly, but when I've almost closed the idea I've been thinking about in my head, I prefer single lines. When working on a project like a game or a movie, it is common that the parts of several sketches that best fit the idea are selected and from this, a final sketch is done.

02a

03 Illustration: Now I have selected a design from my thumbnails, it's time to prepare the base for defining my final drawing.

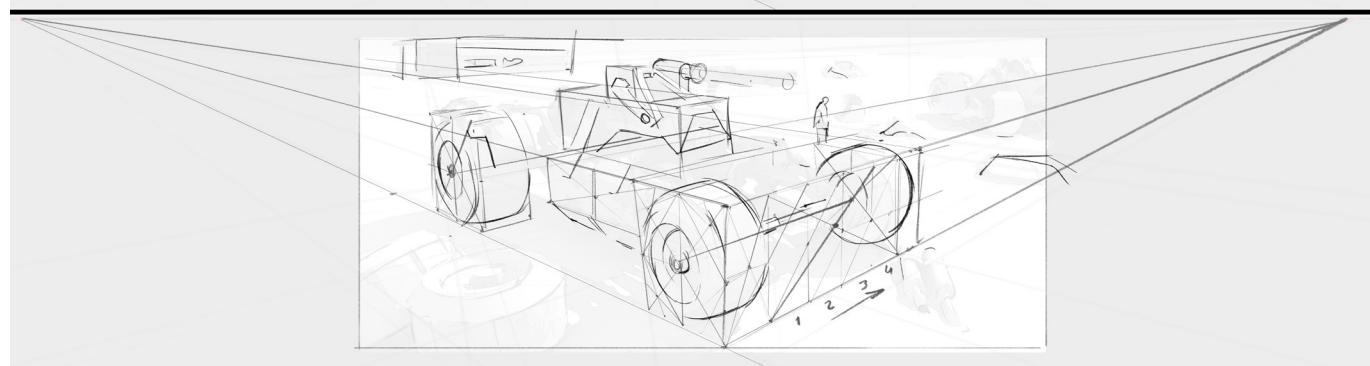
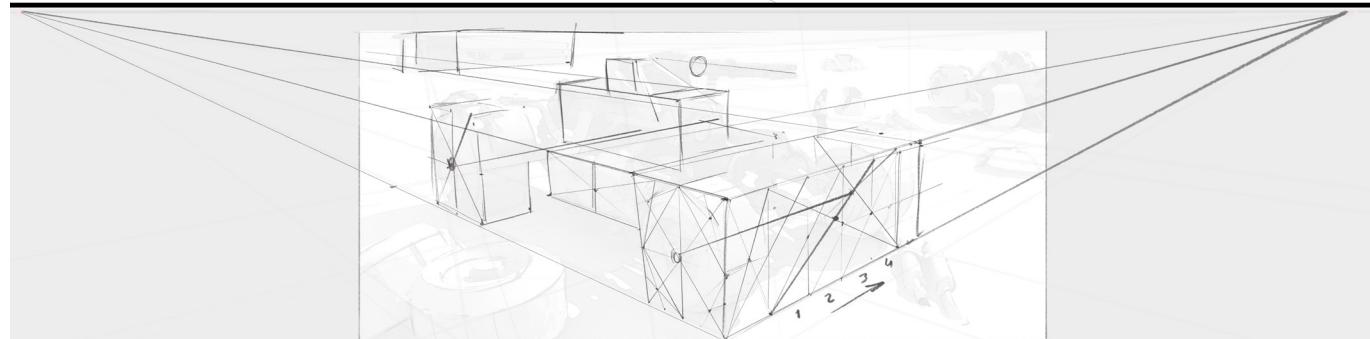
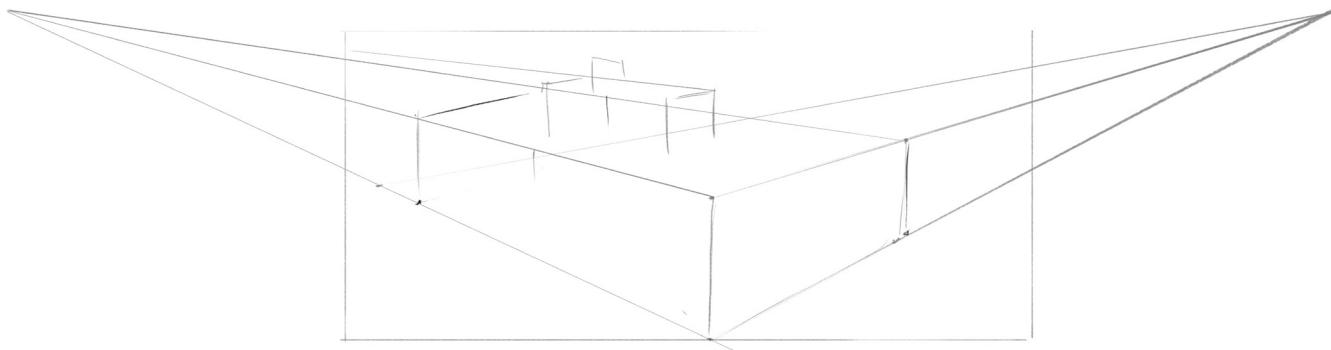
I've always thought that the best way to sell a concept is by way of illustration. Not only does it show the working concept design, but it also tells a story through a situation, adds a background, and perhaps also includes some character information that makes our idea more interesting.

First I make a thumbnail – a small drawing with just a few lines. The idea here is that the buggy is the protagonist, so when thinking about the composition of the drawing, it will occupy most of the canvas.

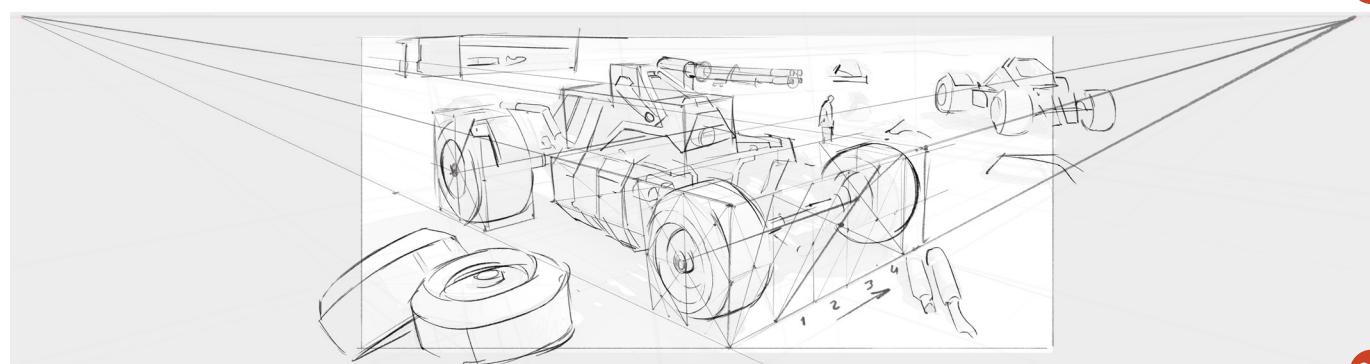
Once I have the scene sketched out with lines, I create a grid with perspective lines to create a better, more realistic design. For the drawing ▶

02b

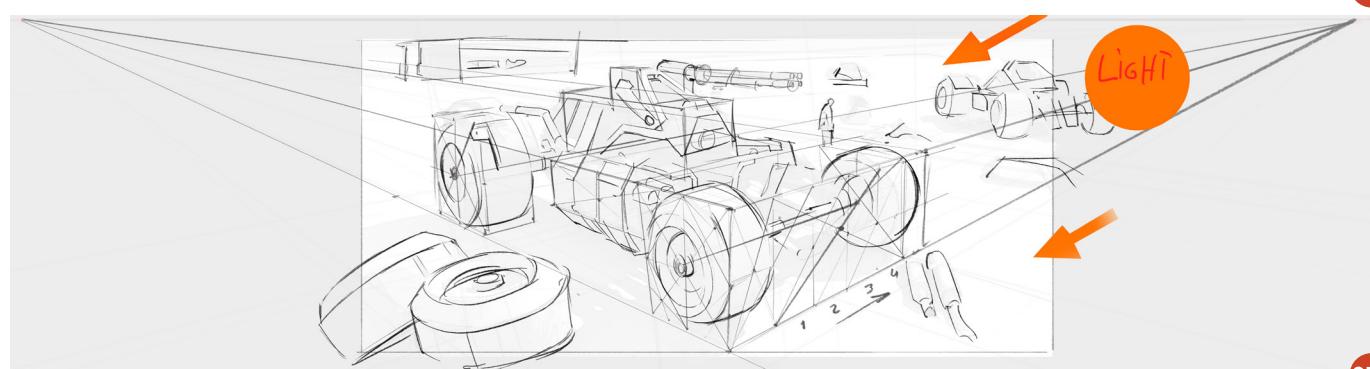
03a



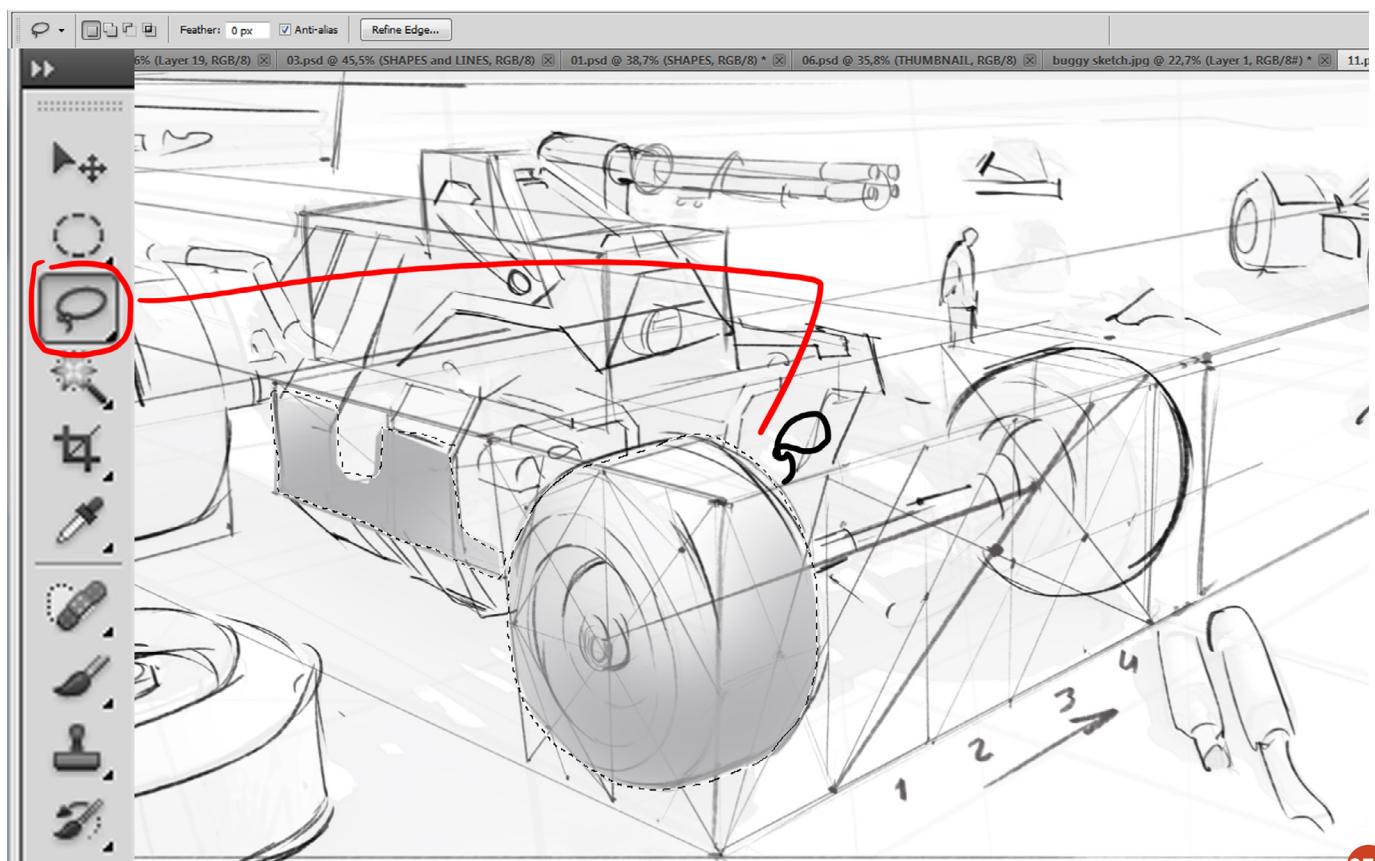
03b



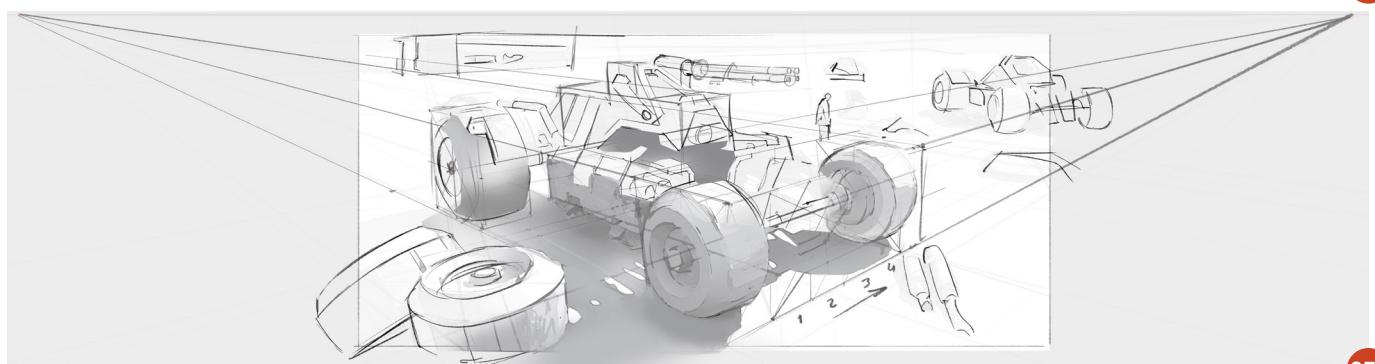
04



05a



05b



05c

to be more accurate, I build the design up from geometrical shapes, so I can better estimate any design problems, and then I add lines to the design on a new layer.

04 Composition: For the drawing to become even more interesting, I try to balance the composition by adding other cars and objects that allow me to achieve a more complex image and, simultaneously, generate a much deeper relationship between the compositional elements.

To make an interesting composition it is good to repeat the same or different elements, and move them into the canvas, trying to generate other ways of reading the design without disturbing the main object in our composition. The sum of these elements must not hinder but instead enhance the illustration.

05 Volume: First, I need to establish where the light source comes from. In this case, as it is an external light source from the sun, the spotlight will be located at the top right.

Following the basic geometric shapes of the drawing, I mask the outline of each object in the scene with the Lasso tool and click the New Layer Mask button in the Layers panel to create a mask that reveals the selection. Afterwards, with a soft-edged brush, I give volume to the areas. I paint using more pressure in the areas where I want to mark shadows, but those that are closest to the light source will need less pressure from the brush to create highlights. To set up your pen pressure, you can go to the Brush Presets menu and check Other Dynamics, then in the Control drop-down menu under Opacity Jitter, set to Pen Pressure. You will now be able to control the opacity of your brushstrokes by the amount of pressure you use. ▶

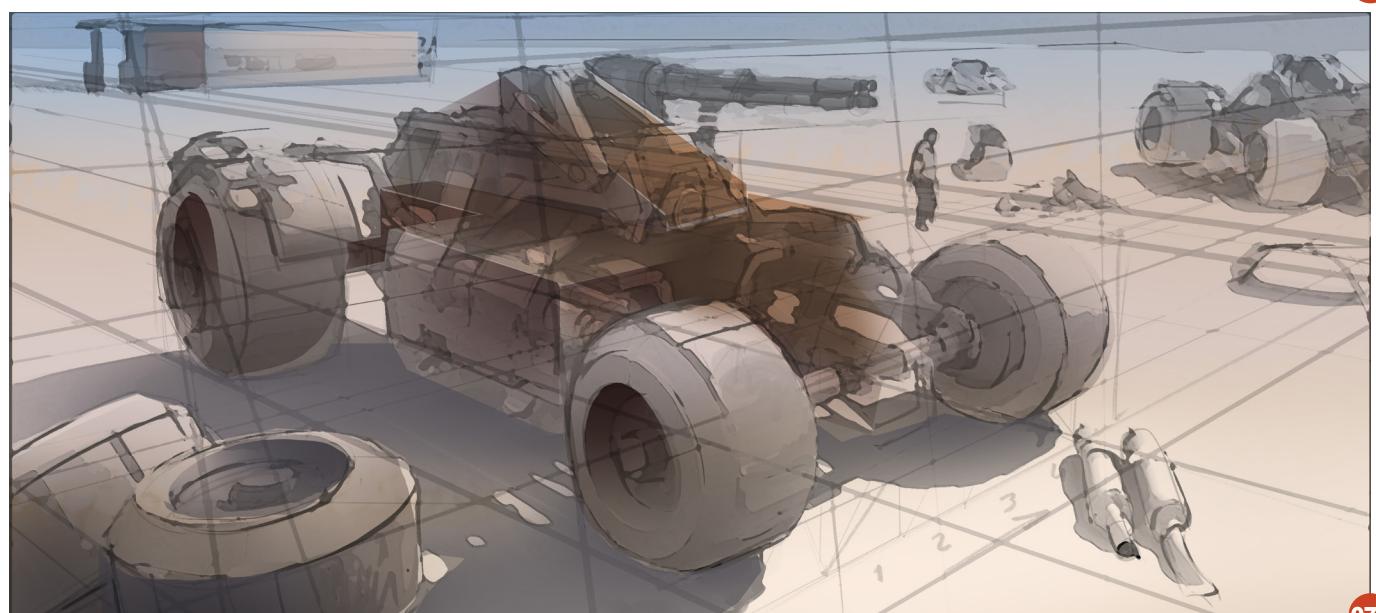
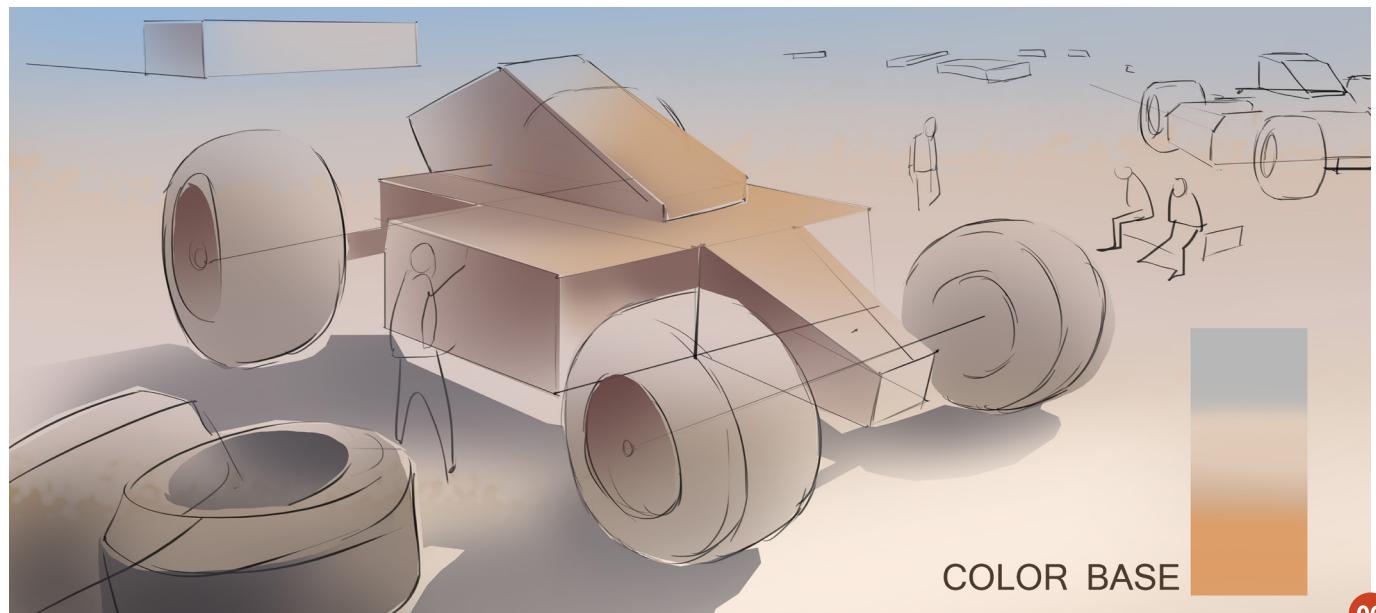
03b Ignacio lays down some perspective lines, and on a new layer builds up his vehicle design

04 He repeats design elements around the composition

05a He positions his light source to determine where the shadows and highlights will fall

05b Using the Lasso tool to create clean lines for the mask

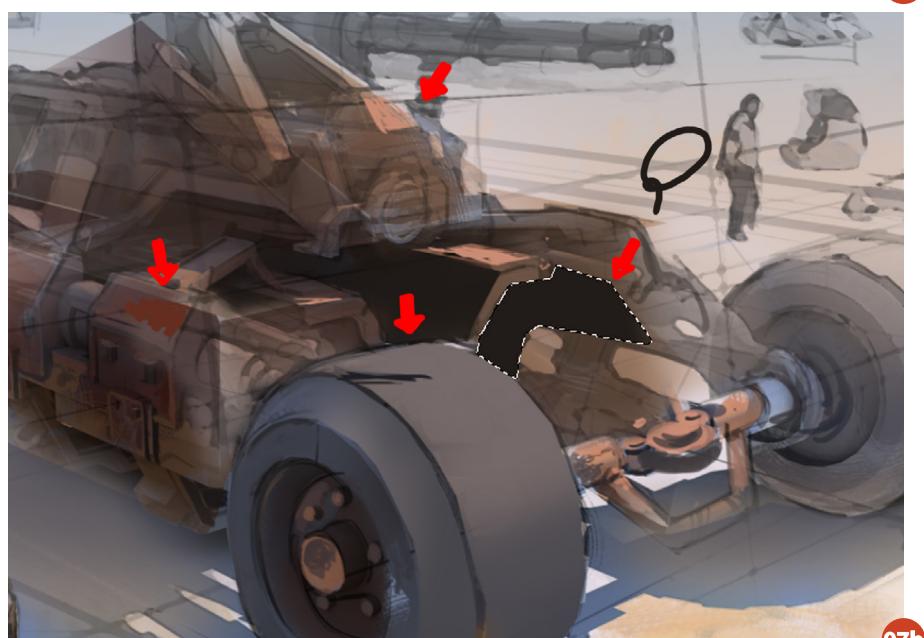
05c Painting a range of values using pressure control

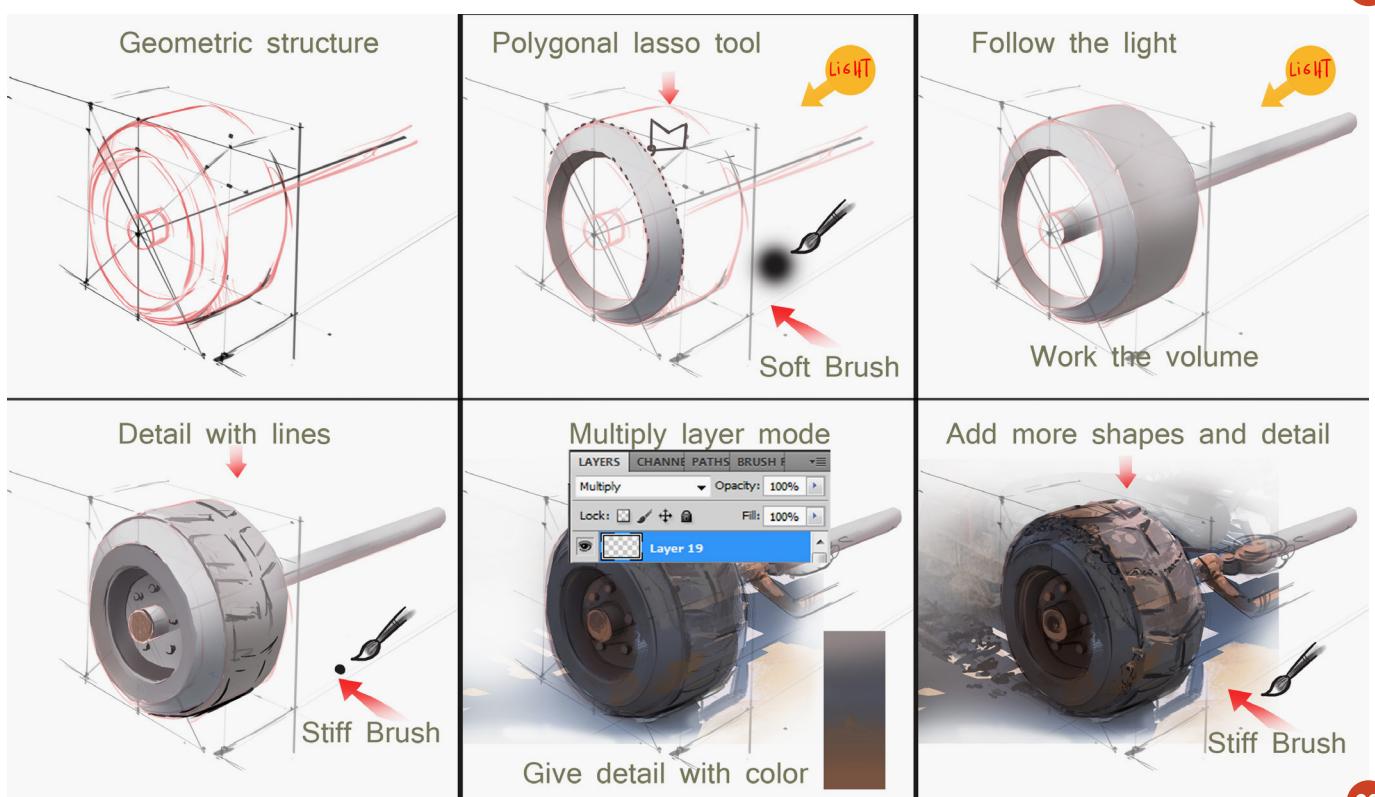
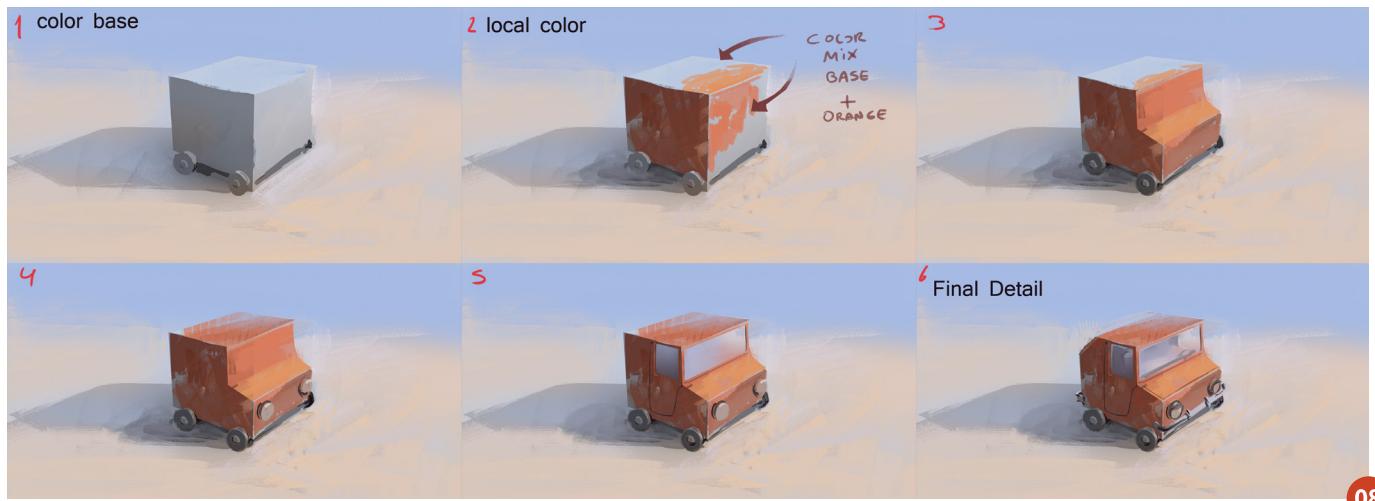


06 Choosing the base color palette: Once you have defined the lights and shadows proceed to locate the first color tones. It is important to know where the scene takes place (indoors, outdoors, in a cave, in the jungle, and so on). In this case, the desert will provide key information to know what the predominant colors are. I select sandy, warm, orangey tones and cool, pale-blue.

07 Painting the base color: To color a drawing the first thing I have to do is apply the base color. In this case it will be blue for the sky and light brown for the ground. I open a new layer on Multiply mode. I start painting by covering the entire surface of the canvas without hiding the drawing's baseline.

I then mark the item's volume with color. I use a dark brown-to-blue for the shadows and brown





with yellow to locate the highlights. Again, I choose the parts that interest me with the Lasso tool and apply the required pressure with the Brush tool to paint the shadows and highlights of each object, in order to separate every little design detail using contrast.

08 Blending colors: In this step I use a specific color for each part of the buggy (local color). This color will blend with the base colors (brown and blue) to create new shades in the palette. In order to better understand this step I will show a simple example to practice painting. Using a simple geometric shape (in this case a cube), I paint with brown and blue (base color) and apply orange and gray (local color), so you can see the color transition and the ultimate effect of this process.

09 Painting a wheel: To summarize what we have seen so far, I will show you how to paint a wheel, step-by-step, from the initial line of the sketch to the final detail – always to be guided by the light source to create contrast. Start with a geometric shape which you can draw your wheel into so it keeps the perspective consistent. Then using the Polygonal Lasso tool, select the different fascias and with a Soft Round brush, paint the shadows and highlights how they would be in response to the direction of the light source. Next, with a hard-edged, stiff brush, paint the finer details such as the tread on the tire. On a Multiply layer begin to paint the tire using your chosen local colors, and finally add some final details using the hard-edged brush. ▶

06 The Color Picker is useful to choose complimentary base colors

07a Painting the base colors on a Multiply layer allows you to still see the lineart

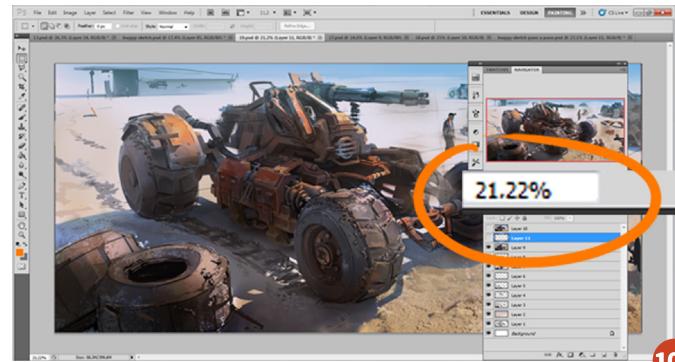
07b Ignacio uses the Lasso tool to select the areas of highlights and shadows

08 Select local colors that will blend with your base color

09 Step-by-step process to paint a tire



10a



10b

10 Detail: To polish a picture it is necessary to concentrate the energy in the main focal point of the composition. Using the light source guide, I work every shape and volume, giving importance to what is closer (more polished area) and lowering the level of detail to everything that is further. The central part of our composition is what will bring greater detail.

So far, I've been working on the entire painting zoomed in to around 21% to enable me to see the full canvas at all times, without losing any detail, and controlling each brushstroke applied. During the first stage of painting you must work from afar to avoid getting lost in details and to see the whole of your image.

From now on I will zoom in to around 45%, to detail each shape and design more precisely, polishing every stroke.

During the process of polishing every shape and detail, I'll go from the general to the particular all the time to control the entire image without fixing my eye for a long time in one area. Follow this process and you will reach a good result.

11 Contrast and distance: In this instance, I realize that many of the items shown in the drawing are mixed together and generate noise, because they have the much same level of detail or contrast. To separate the shapes and generate a better reading of the entire drawing, I tweak the contrasts.

To tweak the contrast of these areas I mask certain parts of the vehicle and the background,



10c



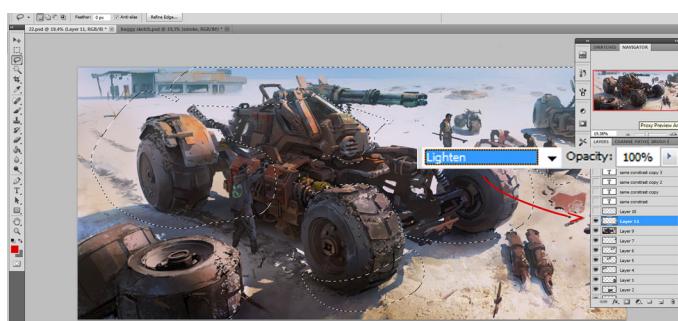
11a

using the sky color (gray-blue). I create a new layer in Lighten mode and paint all those selected areas with a soft-edged brush. This helps me to create a sense of separation between the forms, while also creating a greater sense of distance.

12 Blur effect: As the scene is still very noisy and full of details, I select the entire image and Copy Merged to create a new

layer of the entire collapsed image, which I am going to apply a blur effect to (using Filter > Blur > Gaussian Blur).

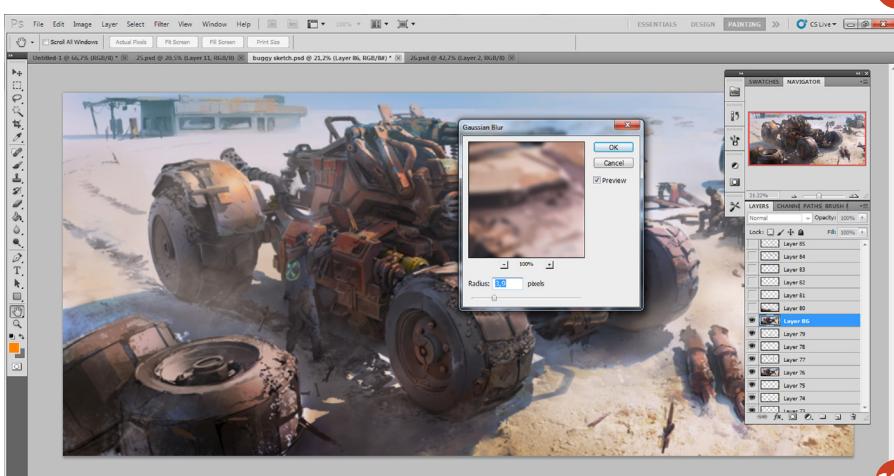
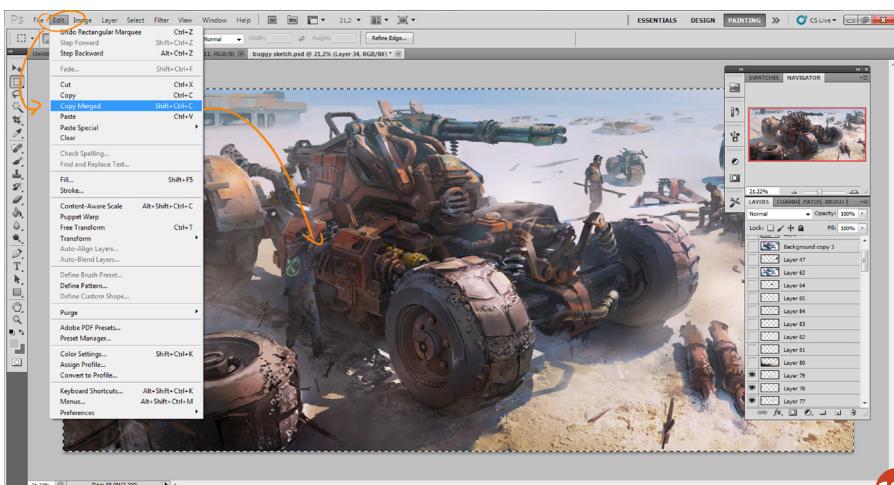
I use the Eraser tool to remove the effects of the Gaussian Blur on the areas I want to have more definition. This way the focus will be on areas not affected by the blur effect.



11b



Happy with the traditional treatment and loose brushstrokes, I call the concept finished. Remember that the most important detail is to focus on the direction of your light source to determine the focal point, tell a story, and turn your illustration into a tool to sell your ideas. ●



10a 1) Foreground areas get the most detail
2) Midground areas decrease in detail
3) Background areas have the least detail

10b At the beginning of the painting process, stay zoomed in to 21%

10c To add detail to different areas, zoom in to 45%

11a Areas where Ignacio noticed that the contrast was too similar

11b On a layer set to Lighten, Ignacio paints the areas of similar contrast

11c The result of the previous process

12a Copy Merge all the layers together

12b The Gaussian Blur preview window lets you see the results of the effect before you OK it

12c Select the main areas of focus with the Lasso tool to delete the effect

The Artist



Ignacio Bazán Lazcano
neisbeis.deviantart.com

The Artist



Ignacio Bazán Lazcano
neisbeis.deviantart.com





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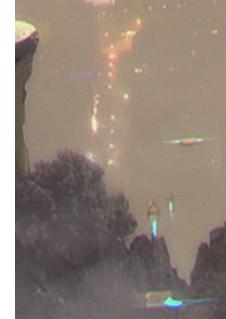
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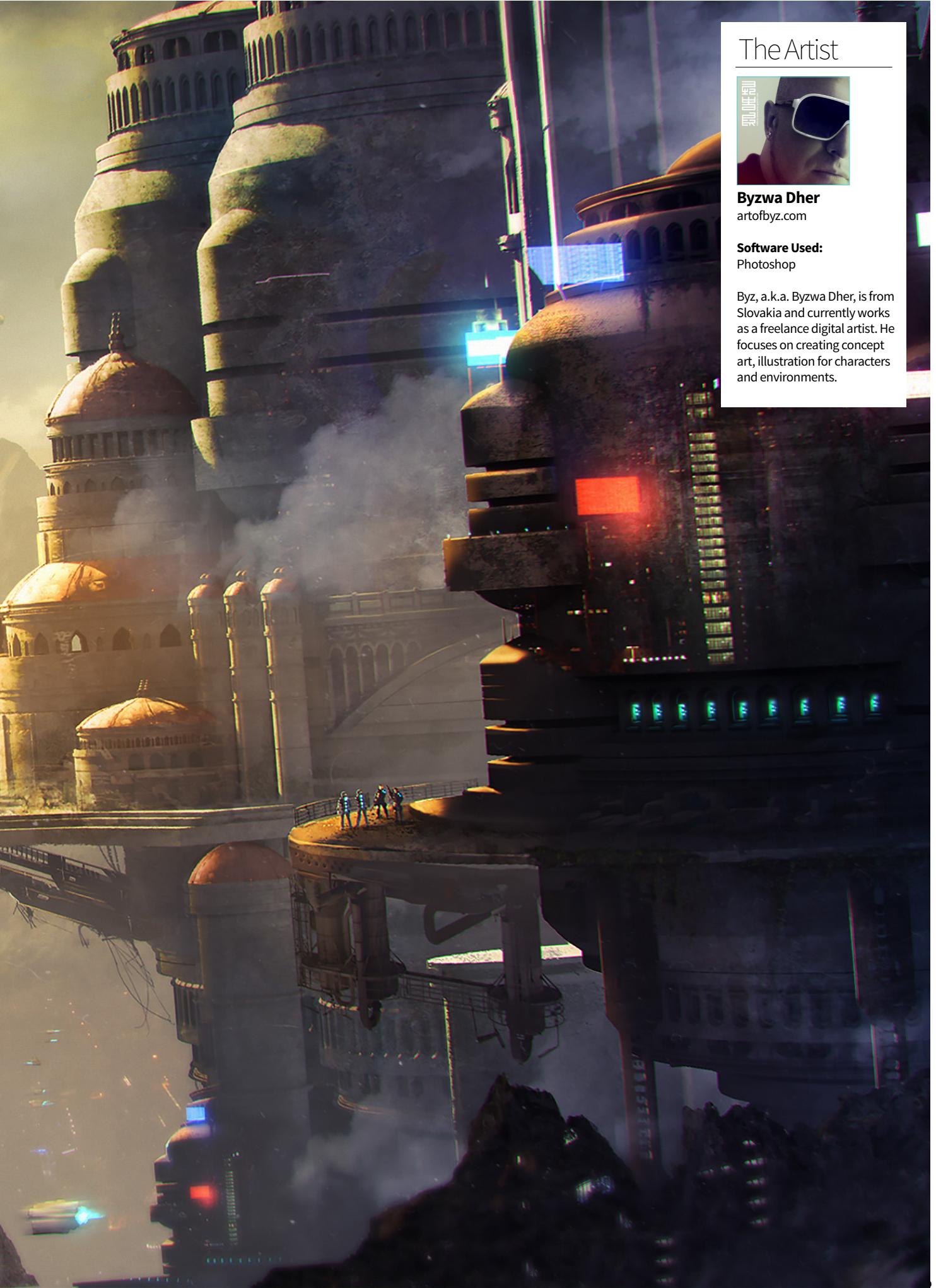
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Build a sci-fi city

Byzwa Dher reveals techniques to incorporate 3D and 2D tools to design and paint a sci-fi city concept. He leads you through his process, using mesh objects in Blender to achieve a base to light and texture the scene 





The Artist



Byzwa Dher

artofbyz.com

Software Used:
Photoshop

Byz, a.k.a. Byzwa Dher, is from Slovakia and currently works as a freelance digital artist. He focuses on creating concept art, illustration for characters and environments.

Create your own busy sci-fi city with these top techniques...

In the previous tutorials I concentrated on the technique of speed painting, which enables me to create environment concepts very fast. In this one, I am going to introduce you to a combined technique, where I am going to create my concept using a 3D model of futuristic architecture, before adding 2D texturing and pre-paint. I decided on this combination because I want the creation to be the most effective from a time point of view.

I was inspired by a marathon of the *Star Wars* saga that I was watching, and so decided on a sci-fi environment.

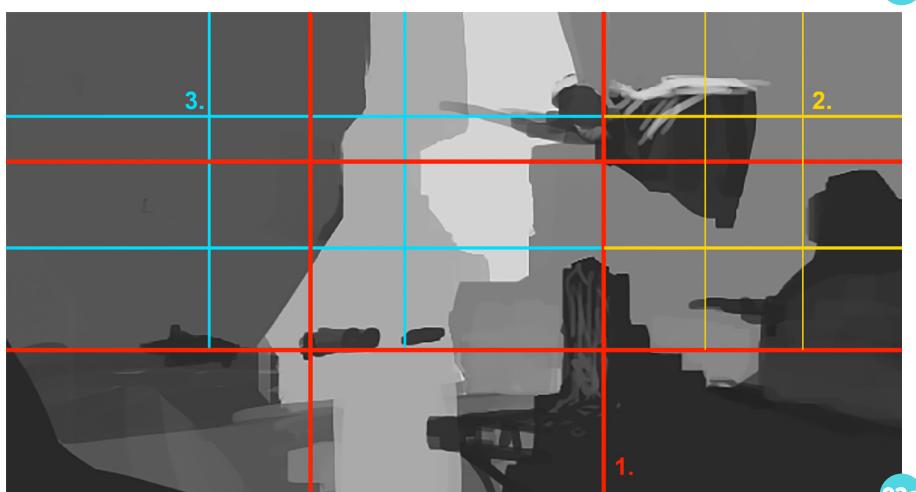
01 **The idea and thumbnail:** It is certainly better and easier to know which direction you want to go in, in contrast to concepts that you begin without an initial idea. I outline some thumbnails (each one takes five minutes maximum) to interpret the vision of the city I have in my head, and I choose the one I'm the most satisfied with.

"I want the viewer's eyes to be lead through the image from the foreground through to the background. Furthermore, I set the perspective of the image to achieve the depth"

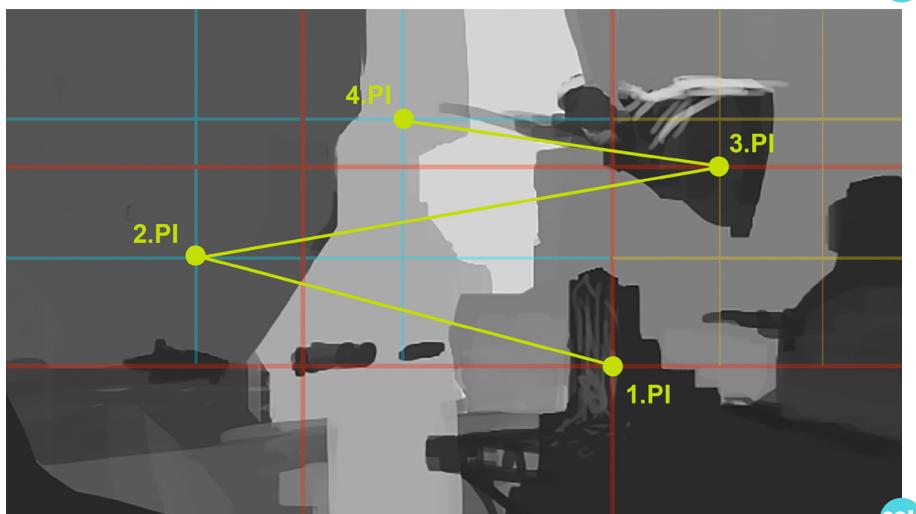
02 **Analysis of thumbnail image – composition:** Once I have the chosen thumbnail, I decide to do a more detailed preparation of the scene. I set up more of the actual composition of the concept at the beginning. Using the rule of thirds, I divide the image with several horizontal and vertical lines into some blocks where I will place/find points of interest – the points where I want to direct



01



02a



02b

01 The chosen thumbnail

02a Dividing the image up using the rule of thirds

02b Leading the viewer's eye on a path through the image

03a Laying down the perspective and horizon line

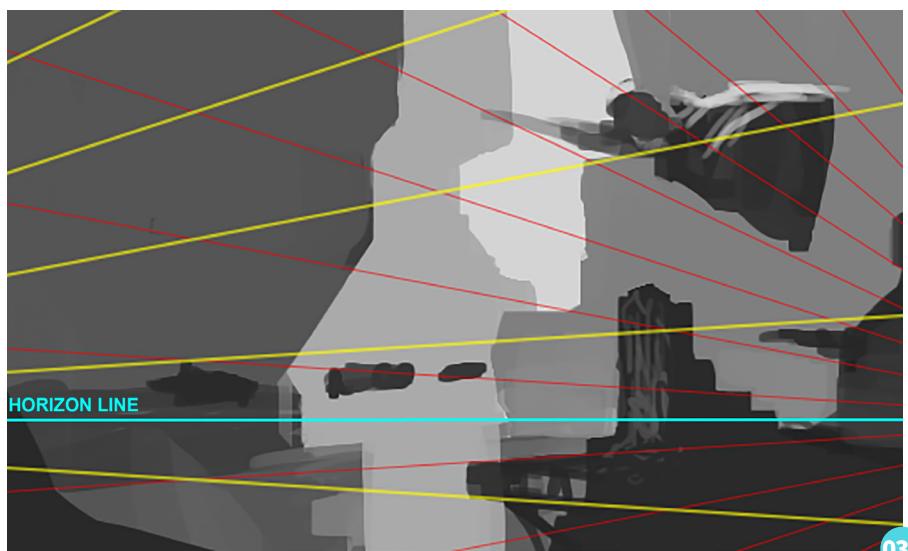
03b Foreground elements will have more detail

04 3D scene wireframe

the eyes of the viewer. Points are to be found in the areas where the lines intersect. I want the viewer's eyes to be lead through the image from the foreground through to the background. Furthermore, I set the perspective of the image to achieve the depth.

03 **Perspective and depth:** Another step to prepare the scene is to outline the perspective to achieve depth. On a separate layer

I add in perspective lines and the horizon line; these will help me when I come to set up the camera and architecture in the 3D editor that I chose, in order to set these elements up quicker. Then I divide the image according to atmospheric perspective, where I clearly define the areas of foreground, midground and background. Defining these at this stage will help to know where to focus the detail on, and which areas will lose detail to the depth.



“Creating a simple 3D base for your images can be really helpful to set up your lighting, and as a firm base to add textures and paintover in Photoshop. Once you have made one, you can also use it as a base in other concepts to save time”

04 3D architecture of the concept:

Creating a simple 3D base for your images can be really helpful to set up your lighting, and as a firm base to add textures and a paintover in Photoshop. Once you have made one, you can also use it as a base in other concepts to save time. These are mainly extruded cubes and cylinders. I try to place the objects in such a way that the scene approaches thumbnail and perspective.

Blender comes with primitive mesh shapes that you can start with to build your scene. When working with cylinders, you can choose the number of vertices in the context panel in the Tool Shelf; the more vertices you have the smoother your cylinder will be. You can transform these objects by moving, scaling and rotating them in Object Mode. You can also extrude the faces and edges to create variations of the shapes; you need to be in Face Select mode and hold **Ctrl+right-click** on the faces, then click **Extrude Region**, and the faces will move to where your mouse moves. Click the left mouse button to confirm. ▶



03b



04

05 The combination of layer passes

06a The combination of passes when imported to Photoshop

06b Create depth by increasing the contrast and saturation on the foreground buildings

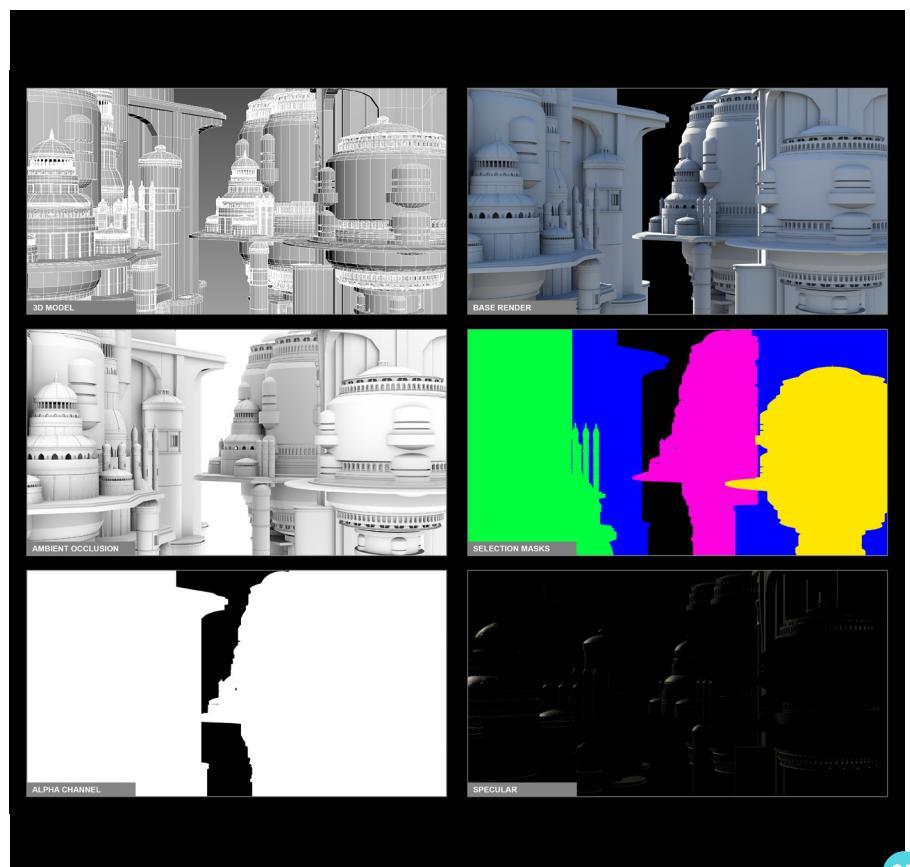
07a Painting a grunge texture over the buildings

07b The tone is altered using the layer adjustments, and a background photo is added

07c A contrast color of red is added to the tops of the buildings

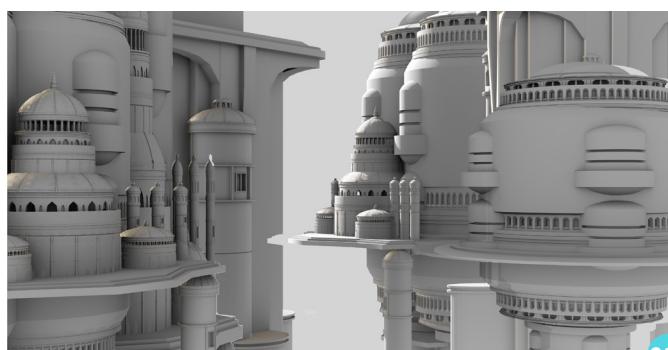
08a Using a standard brush to paint over areas I'm not happy with

08b Bring darker element into the foreground to make the closest buildings pop



05

05 Render passes: When I am satisfied with the scene in Blender, the next step is to apply the render passes that will help me with other work in Photoshop. In this case, I started with my gray base render, and added an Ambient Occlusion and a Specular pass to emphasize the light and shadow. Then I applied an Alpha Channel and Selection Masks which will make the cutting of individual parts of architecture faster and easier in Photoshop later on.



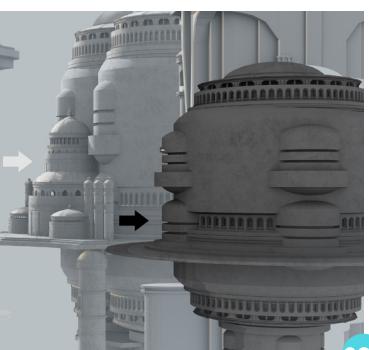
06a



06b

is kind of flat, so I start with editing the values of individual buildings, keeping in mind that the ones in front have the most contrast. To increase the atmosphere, I add a blue hue over the entire scene with a layer blend mode set to Overlay.

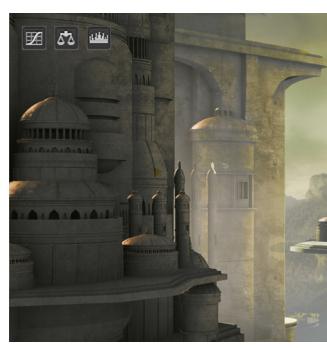
07 Colorful tone of image and first details: I decide that the architecture will be set in daylight with a combination of cold



06b



07a

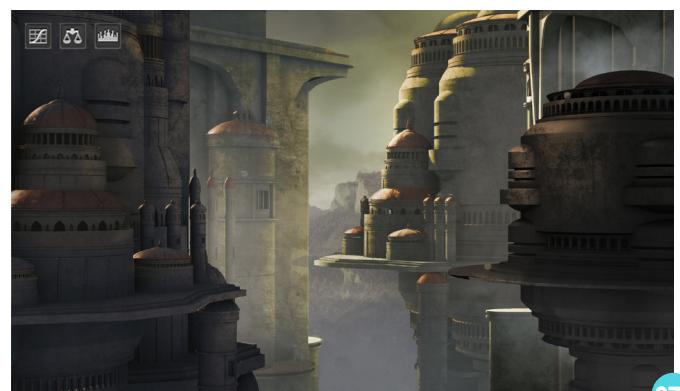


07b

tones in the shade. I use Levels and Color Balance, and add an overlay of grunge textures to the buildings to achieve a base tone.

To brighten the image, I add a mountain and sky image into the background (from a free texture site) which I will edit and paint on in the final detailing stage. I keep the forefront intentionally darker because I decide to emphasize the buildings in front by using light effects – these will be more visible on the darker background later on. I will add in more red tones to the building roofs to help separate the elements.

08 Painting of details and elimination of mistakes: In this step the scene is starting to come together, so I begin to add more details while zoomed in. It is also the time for correcting mistakes or making changes from previous steps. I'm not satisfied with the shape of the windows on the building to the left, so there is nothing easier than to re-paint it with a standard round brush using the Eyedropper tool to replicate the tones of the surrounding areas. To brighten the foreground, frame the bottom of

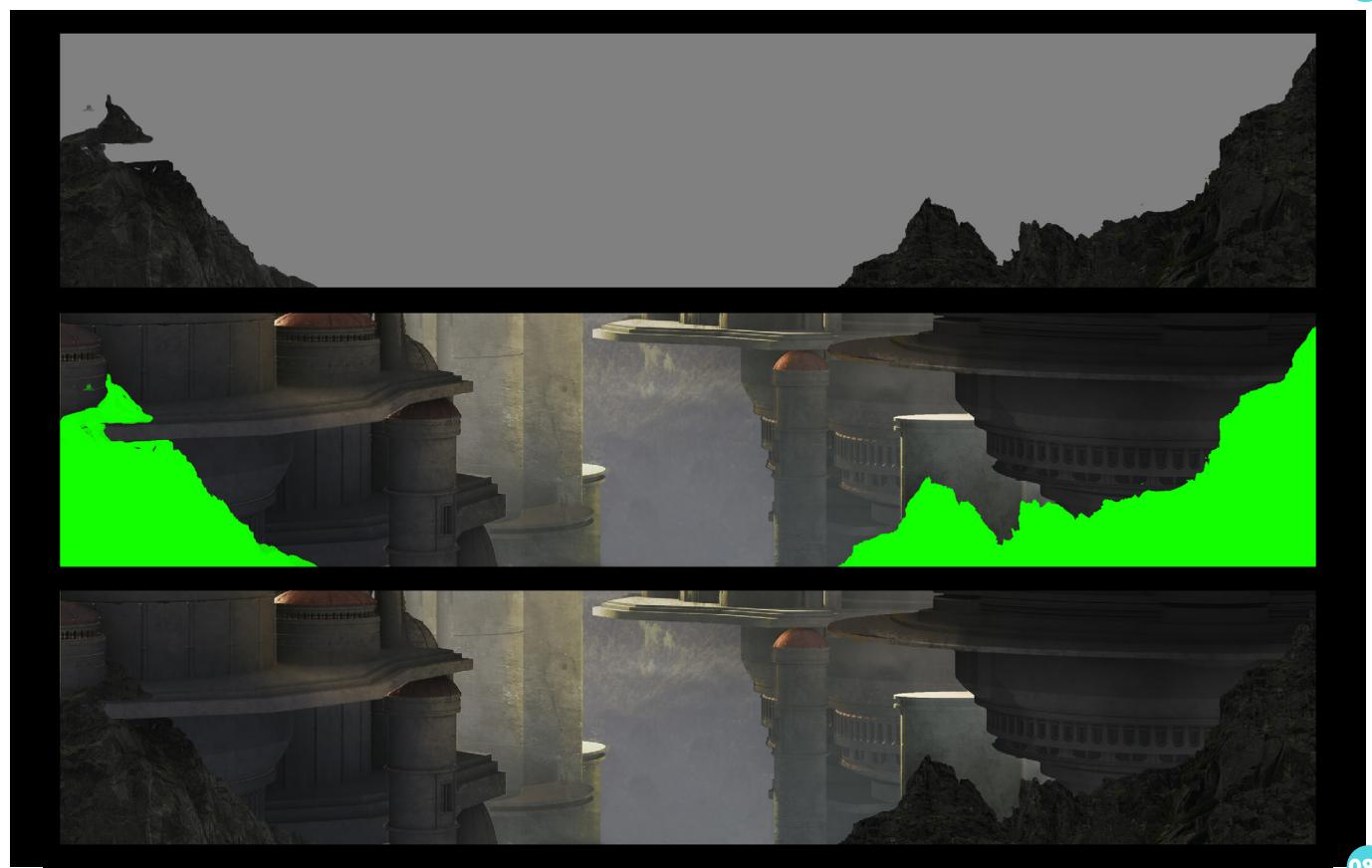


07c

the image and reinforce the idea that the city is placed in a natural rocky environment, I add in some dark rocks. To create these, use the Lasso tool to draw out some rocky shapes, then with the Clone Stamp and Brush tool, take textures from the background image and paint inside the selection. ▶



08a



08b

09 Other painting of details and light:

Now it's time to define the light source – the sun. I place the light shining from the top-left corner across the midground of the scene to the bottom-right corner behind the foreground buildings. With a big soft brush, I paint yellow highlights where the light reflects on individual sections of the buildings on the right.

Then with a hard-edged brush I continue to add details such as grass, cables, columns and towers. I want the buildings to look older and a little neglected, so I paint with a texture brush. I add dirt and noise to areas of the buildings. Now the scene is more detailed and closer to completion, it is time to add the presence of life/humans.

10 Adding in spaceships:

We are in the final stages now, so it is time to add action to the scene. For me the clear rush of a sci-fi city are the flying vehicles of spaceships and rocket propelled objects. Using the Lasso tool, I create various shapes of rockets, keeping their scale in mind. With the selection still made, I use a small brush to paint in some neutral tones, and with a slightly darker color I paint some lines in for detail. To outline the movement, I add blue engine flames coming from the motors. To achieve this look, I select a bright blue color and with a soft brush set to a lower opacity of around 70%, I paint in a few lines at the back of the vehicle. Then with a lighter and brighter blue and a hard-edged brush, I paint in highlights closer to the engine. To finish off the effect, I then add a small amount of Motion Blur to areas of the rockets to create a sense of movement (Filter > Blur > Motion Blur).

11 Extra lights:

I brighten the windows of the buildings with light sources that create an illusion there is something happening in the buildings. I paint these with the same techniques I used for the jet engines in the previous step, but don't add the Motion Blur.

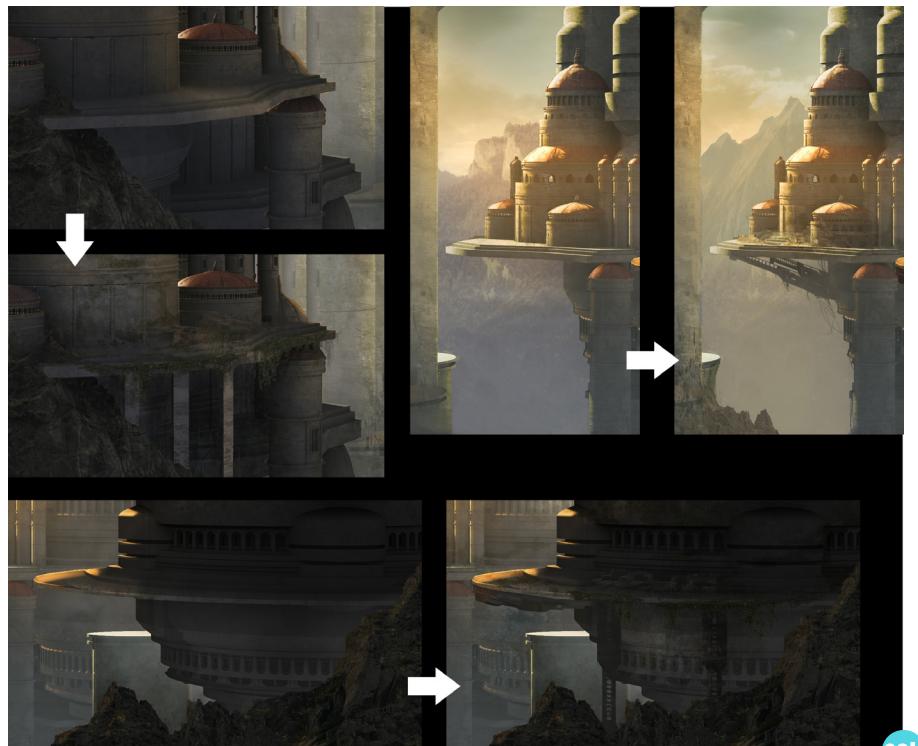
I also add strips of light to the panels of the roof. I do this by adding a layer on top of my scene set to Screen mode, and then into this layer I add a nightlife photo (you can find these on free texture sites such as www.cgtextures.com and www.freetextures.3dtot.com). As you will see, the Screen mode makes the black/dark pixels disappear while keeping the white ones, and is great for creating glow effects!

12 Signs of human life:

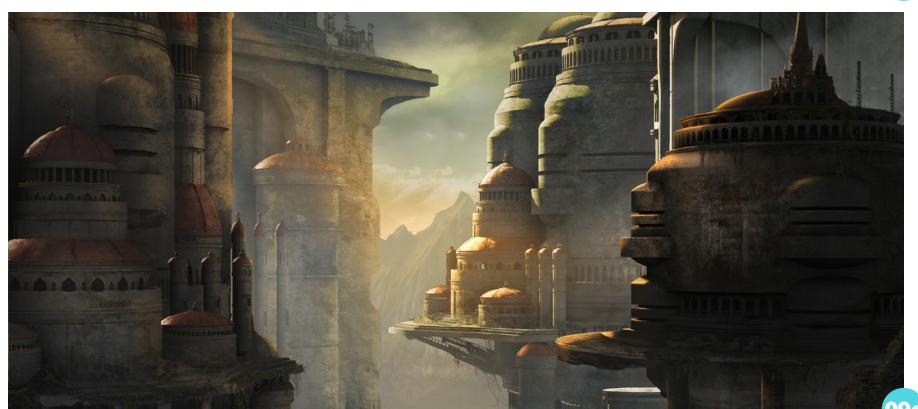
I use the Lasso tool to draw silhouettes of men on the balcony of one of the buildings. I fill them with a base color and then paint in some small details include some sci-fi lights (see step 10). I also



09a



09b



09c

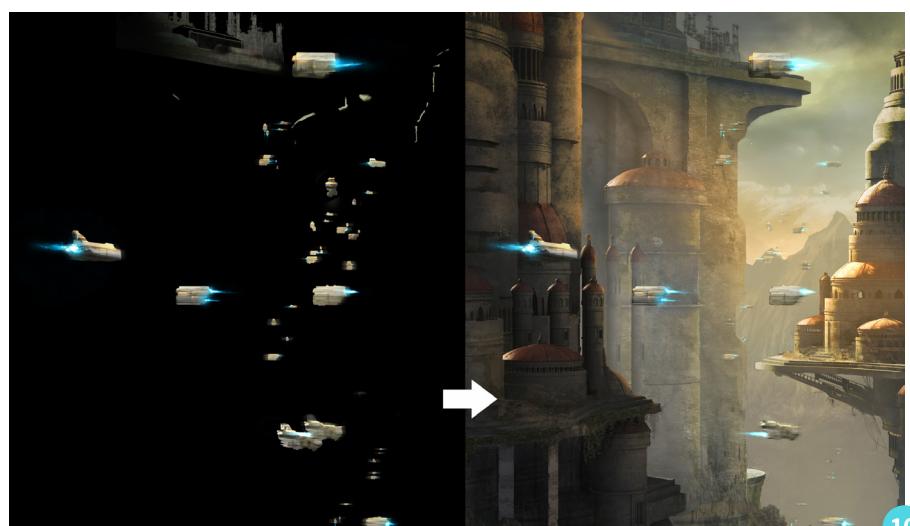
add some flag details, to make these sit in the scene don't forget to use your light source to see where to paint highlights and shadows. In this case I paint a strip of shadow along the wall using a dark color with a Soft brush at low opacity (around 20%).

As the last detail I add atmospheric smoke behind the foreground building on the right for a better division of the layers. I use a cloud-like brush set to a low opacity. You can create your own cloud brush using a photo either from a free texture site or a photo you have taken yourself.

I also add in some light rays from the right side to emphasize light, by creating a new layer on top of the image and setting the color palette to white foreground and black background. Then go to Filter > Render > Clouds and click enter. Next I go to Image > Adjustment > Threshold and click OK. Go to Filter > Blur > Radial Blue, then in the pop-up menu enter Amount 80, check Blur Method Zoom and Quality Good. Then I move the Blur Center to where my light source is and click OK. I set the Layer to Soft light and lower the Opacity and Fill until I have my desired effect. Finally, I swap over the foreground and background colors and add a Layer Mask. With a big Soft Round brush, I paint over the areas/buildings I want to hide from the light, so it appears the light is falling behind it.

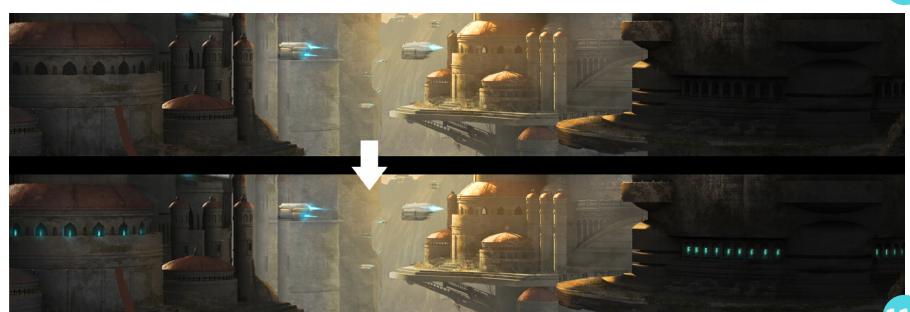
The final step to the scene is to add a little toning. I mainly add cold tones in the dark places using the Color Balance, Levels and Curves menus. Finally, I use the Free Transform tool to slightly rotate the scene for better dynamics. ●

09a Place the direction of light to help paint the highlights



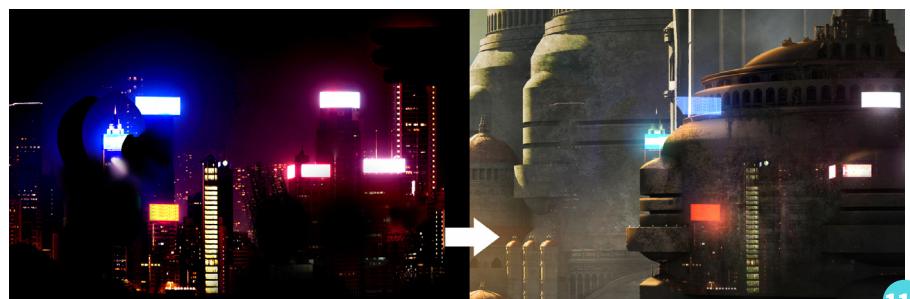
10

09b Add finer details such as age and wear in the scene



11a

09c The scene with all the extra details added in



11b

10 Creating moving objects to add action in the image



12a

11a The window lights were created with a similar technique to the vehicles



12b

11b Use the Screen blending mode to achieve a glow effect

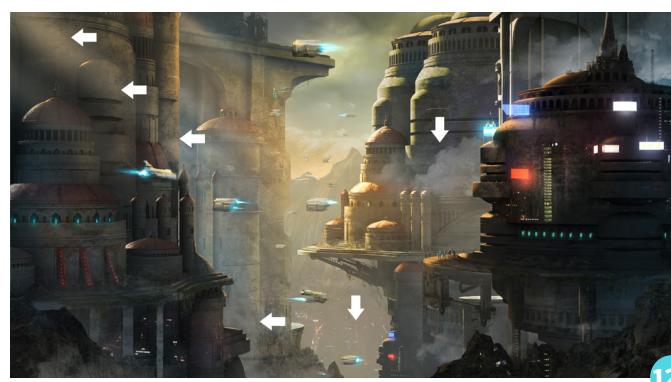


12c

11c Adding more details

12a Light ray and smoke give an atmospheric affect

12b Final adjustments to the scene



12b



12c

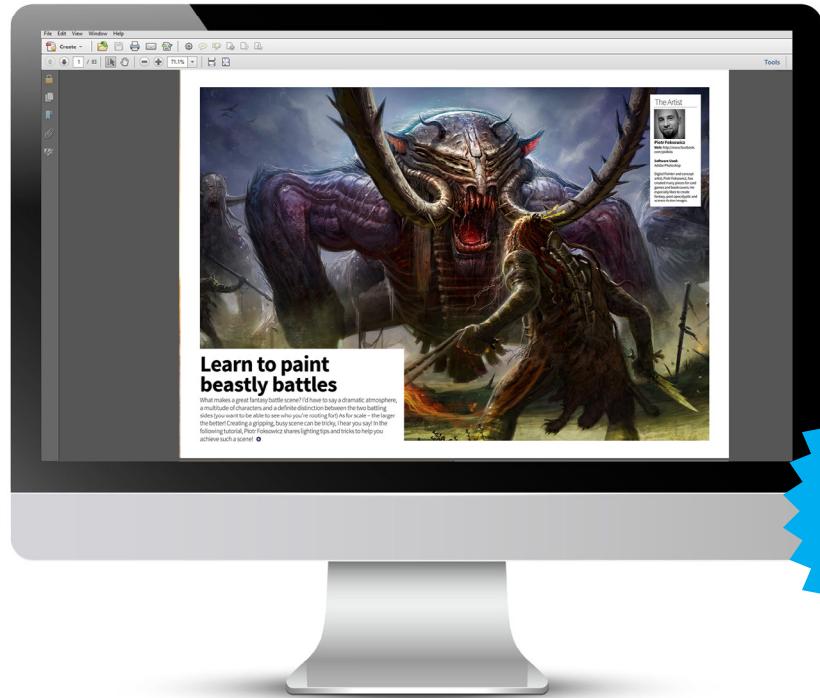
The Artist



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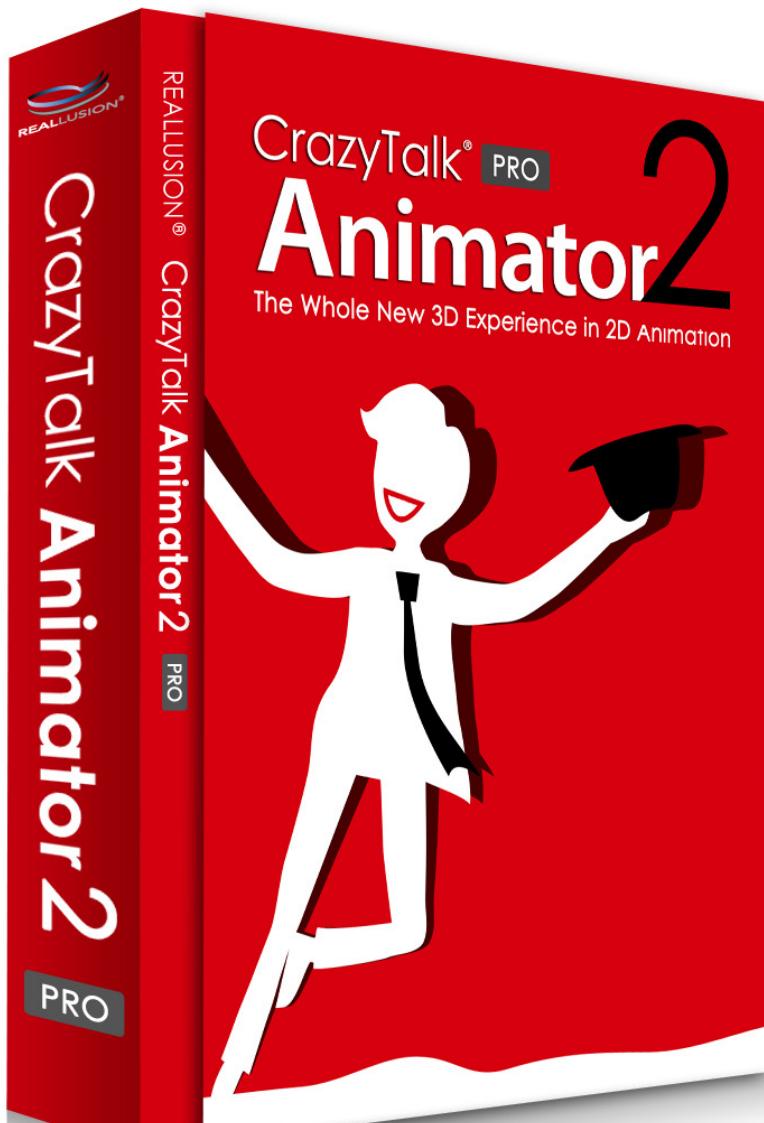
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The Artist



Renée Chio

reneechio.com

Software Used:
Photoshop

Renée Chio is a freelance animator and illustrator. Her work as a professional has been mainly for animation projects, such as feature film, TV shows and animation for live shows.



Render stylized pin-ups

Discover top tips and techniques for painting the perfect pin-up! Renée Chio leads you through her process of designing and painting a steampunk pin-up, from conceiving the outfit and creating textures, to choosing a color palette and achieving a balanced composition ➔

Read on to learn how to digitally paint a steampunk pin-up girl...

In this tutorial I will go through the whole process of creating a steampunk pin-up from the sketch to the final piece. I'll explain how to choose the best pose and lighting for a pin-up, how to design the outfit according to a reference, and creating textures with brushes and other tools. We'll also look at picking a palette and finding a nice composition.

First of all, we need to understand how the steampunk style can be applied to a pin-up. There are certain materials such as leather, gold and other metals that are featured in this style and can be easily adapted to a pin-up outfit. And in order to make it look very pin-up-like, we have to watch out for those typical poses and attitudes. Steampunk props are also important to make it look like the industrialized era of the 19th Century. I'll cover a few of them. For the purpose of this tutorial I picked hat, goggles, buckles, corset, and pocket watch.

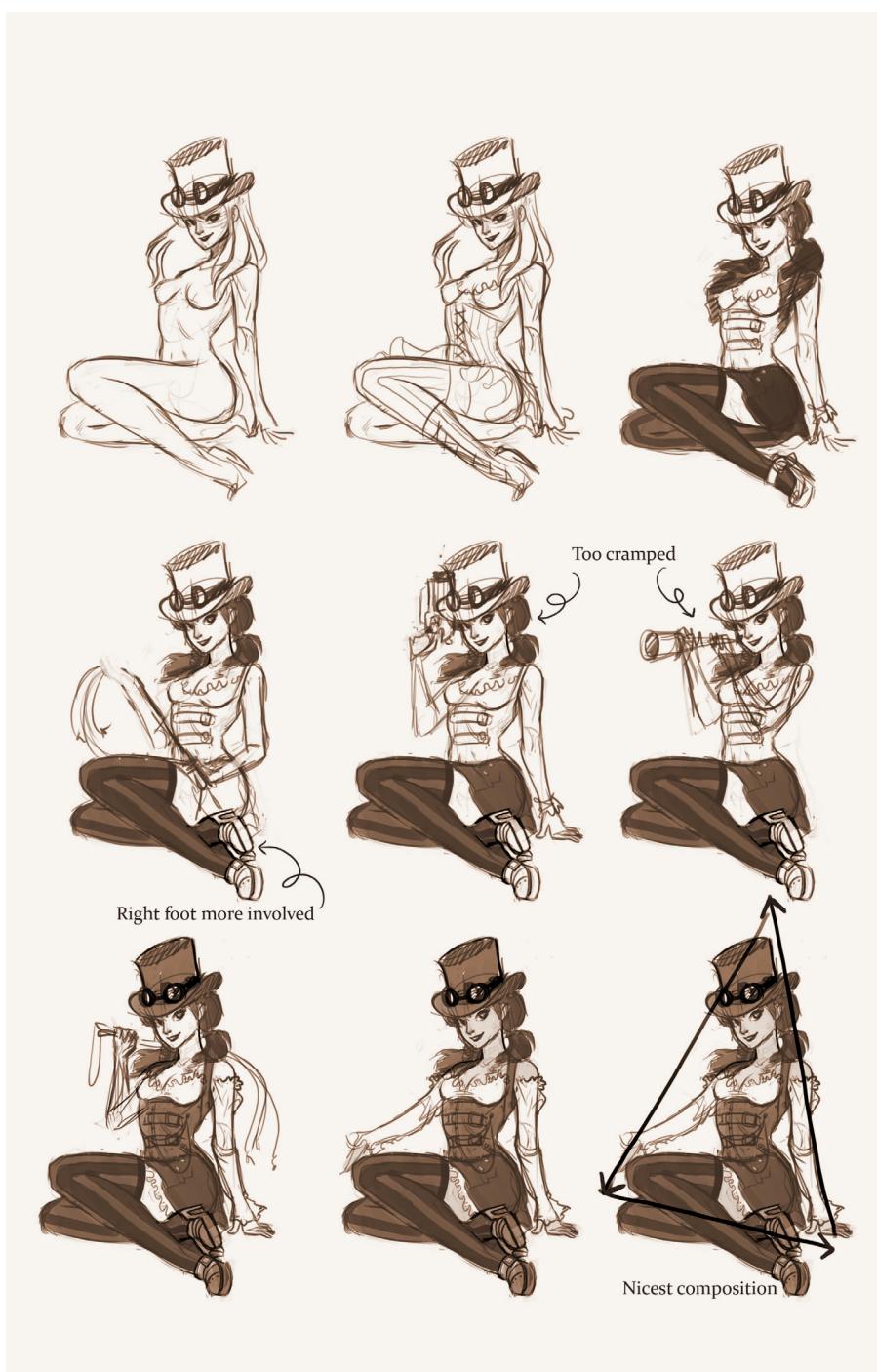
Another thing that we need to know about the steampunk style is the particular color palette that consists of a variety of warm tones, especially brown, sepia and reddish tones that get accentuated by brighter colors from the metallic materials.

The lighting I use is very basic, but it serves the purpose of making the face stand out by creating contrast in the eye area and displays the outfit properly. I will start working from the face and work my way outwards.

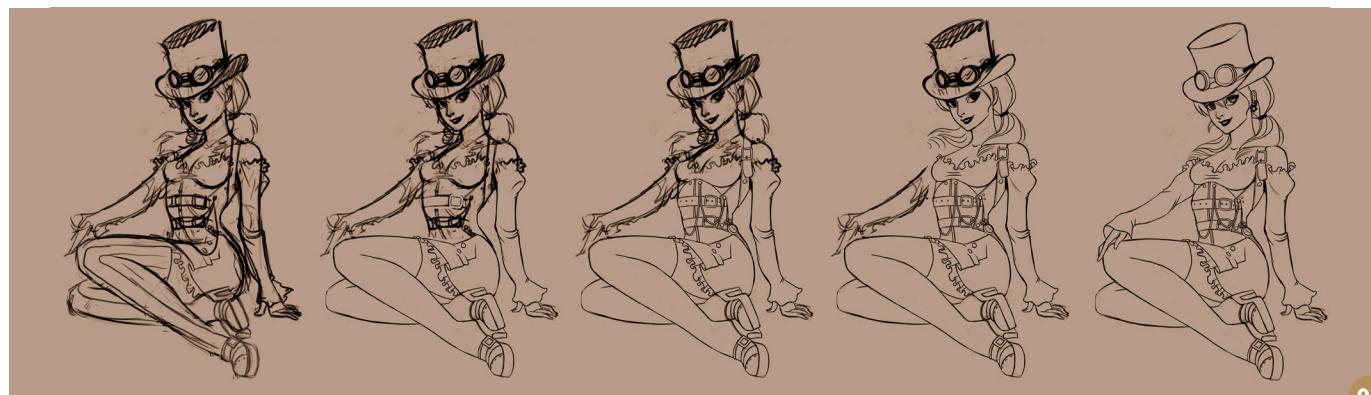
01 Choosing the pose and outfit: I sketch using a basic Hard Round brush, with which the opacity can be controlled with the pen pressure. I come up with a pin-up-like pose that helps show the elements clearly. A sitting upright pose condenses most of the design into a smaller area, and this makes it easier to appreciate the details of the outfit. Pigtails are a personal choice. I know I want the design to include some typical steampunk elements like the corset, the hat, the goggles, flounce and thigh highs. But I also try other things like a whip, a gun or a telescope, though props closer to the head and the torso make it look cramped, so I discard that option and rather go for posing her hand on her knee because this makes the composition flow better. At this point I also have some of the base tones figured out. ▶

● Reference images for research

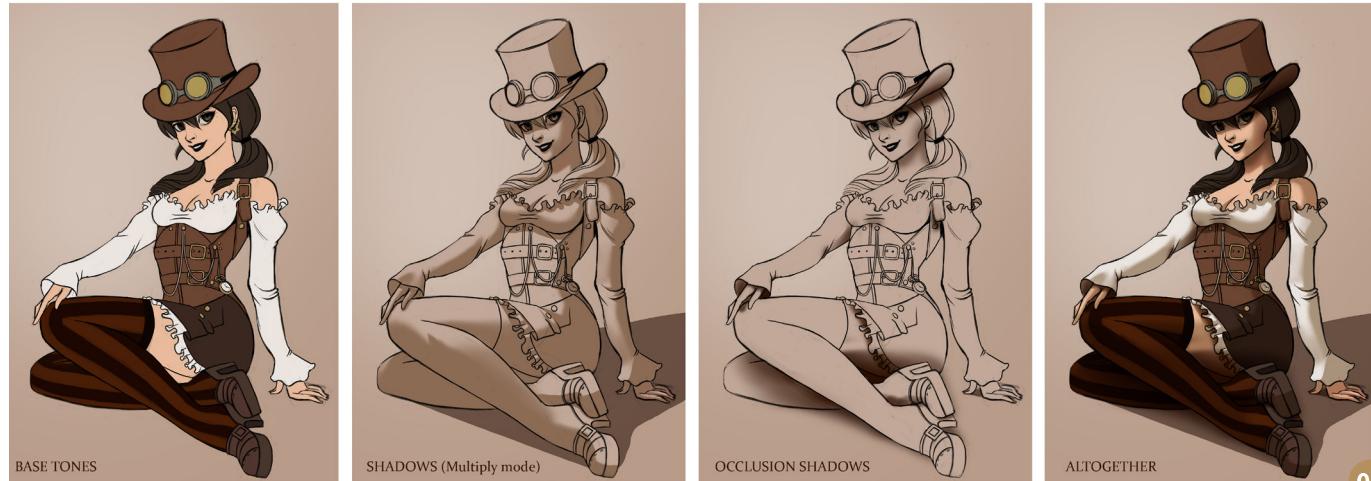
Photographer: Drew Hopkins
Model: Stacie Snow
Makeup Artist/Hair Stylist:
Monique McLaughlin



● Composition is all about leading the eye around the image



02



03

02 Cleaning up the sketch: Instead of creating a new layer and making a clean copy, I clean up the actual sketch because I like to keep some of the roughness; it makes it feel more organic. It also allows me to keep working on the design without having to change layers. I sketch and clean up on the same one at the same time. I start by tidying up the rough lines using the same Hard brush (only this time I also control the size of the brush with the pressure) and the eraser. First, I erase the edges that are too rough, until they are more defined, and then I use the brush to define forms or fill in the blanks. As I do this process I come up with ideas for the design. Based on my reference, I add more steampunk elements, such as the pocket watch and some strings looped through the corset.

03 Base tones, lighting and composition: Since it's all going to be warm tones, it's easier to keep a nice contrast between them. I choose brownish colors for most materials, and I try to keep the brighter colors on the top half and darker tones on the bottom. I make sure that the face gets more attention by making the hair, the skin and the hat contrast. The lighting will also play an important role in the composition. I deliberately put my light source slightly high, so that it creates a shadow in the eye area and thus generates even more contrast. I paint the

shadows and the cast shadows with light brown on a new layer on top and set it to Multiply mode. Then I paint the occlusion shadows (on another layer) in areas where the light can't reach – this will automatically darken areas that won't draw the attention from the face.

04 The pin-up face: Classical pin-up faces have a very particular style. They usually have candid expressions, big doe eyes

and red lips. It's also the focal point of this type of illustration, so it has to draw the attention of the viewer instantly. For this reason I tend to polish the face a lot more than the rest of the composition. Once I have the base tones and the lighting figured out, I paint with a saturated orange tone using a Soft brush set to Color mode on the edge between light and shadow to make it look livelier. Then I repeat the same process with a yellow tone on the light. I blend the colors

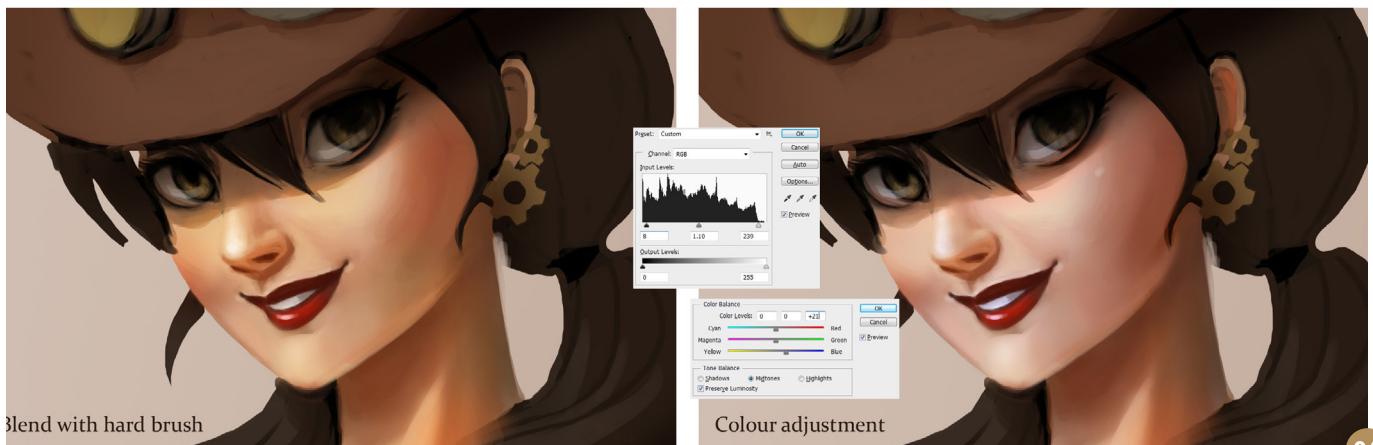
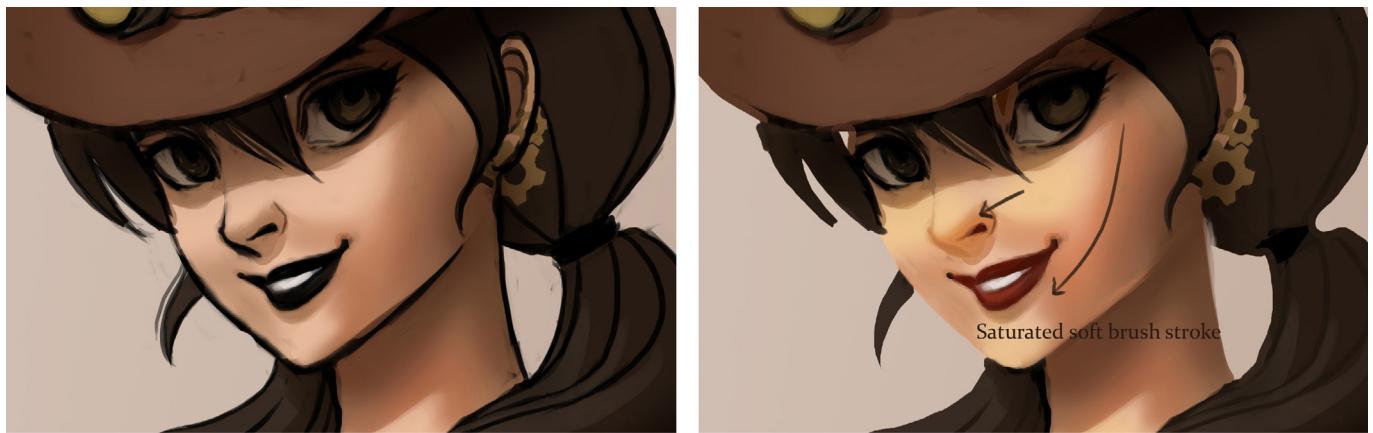
⚡ PRO TIPS

How to understand textures

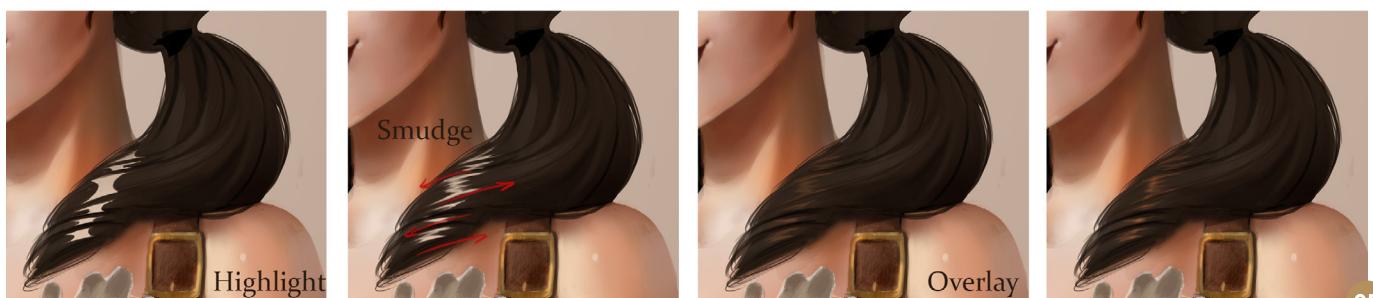
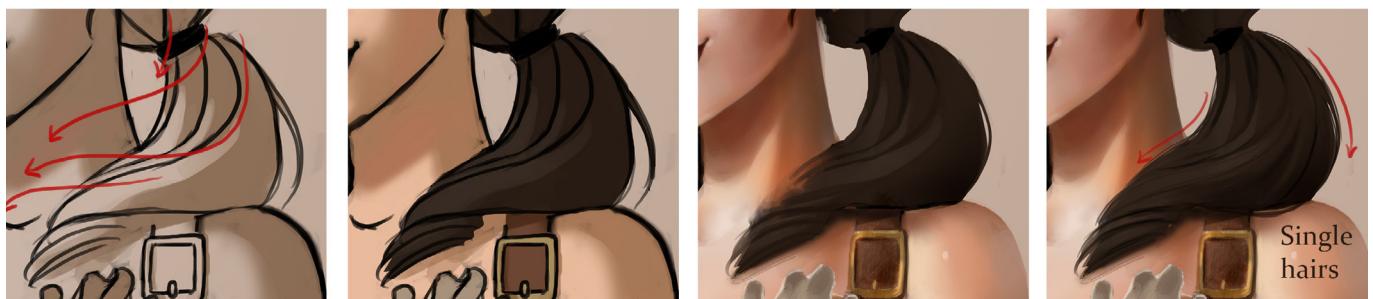
Whenever I come across a texture I haven't painted before, I take my time to analyze its colors, tones, highlights, and the smoothness of the surface, because those are the basic properties that will determine whether it's a translucent, reflecting, soft, rough, or opaque material. Then I try to figure out mentally how I can achieve that look using Photoshop. I'd suggest playing around with all the tools, change the settings and finding out what they're good for or what you can do with them.

Thumbnailing for design

Thumbnailing is important for conceptualizing. When you design something from reference (especially when drawing something out of your comfort zone), you need to make several versions before you settle for one. Gather as much reference as you can, dive in and become familiar with it; chances are your first few sketches probably won't get the style quite right. So start copying first and little by little you'll come up with your own designs and ideas. If your thumbnails look too similar to each other, try working with silhouettes first – this will help you to vary the shapes and sizes.



04



05

using a Hard brush at 30% of opacity to get soft gradients. To help it stand out a little more, I make some color adjustments and then desaturate the lit side with the Sponge tool set to Desaturate.

05 Making pretty hair: When I do the sketch and the base tones, I define the hair locks with lines and shadow, wrapping them around each other to make it look curled. I vary the size of the locks so that they feel more natural. Now I polish the edges to define the shape of the

pigtail, and with a much smaller brush I paint single hairs all around it so that it doesn't look like a solid shape, but more like actual hair. To make the highlights I paint sideways H-shaped forms using the Hard brush.

Then I smudge them following the direction of the hair using the Smudge tool with a small Hard brush. At the end I set that layer to Overlay mode, duplicate it and erase the edges to make it a thinner highlight. ▶

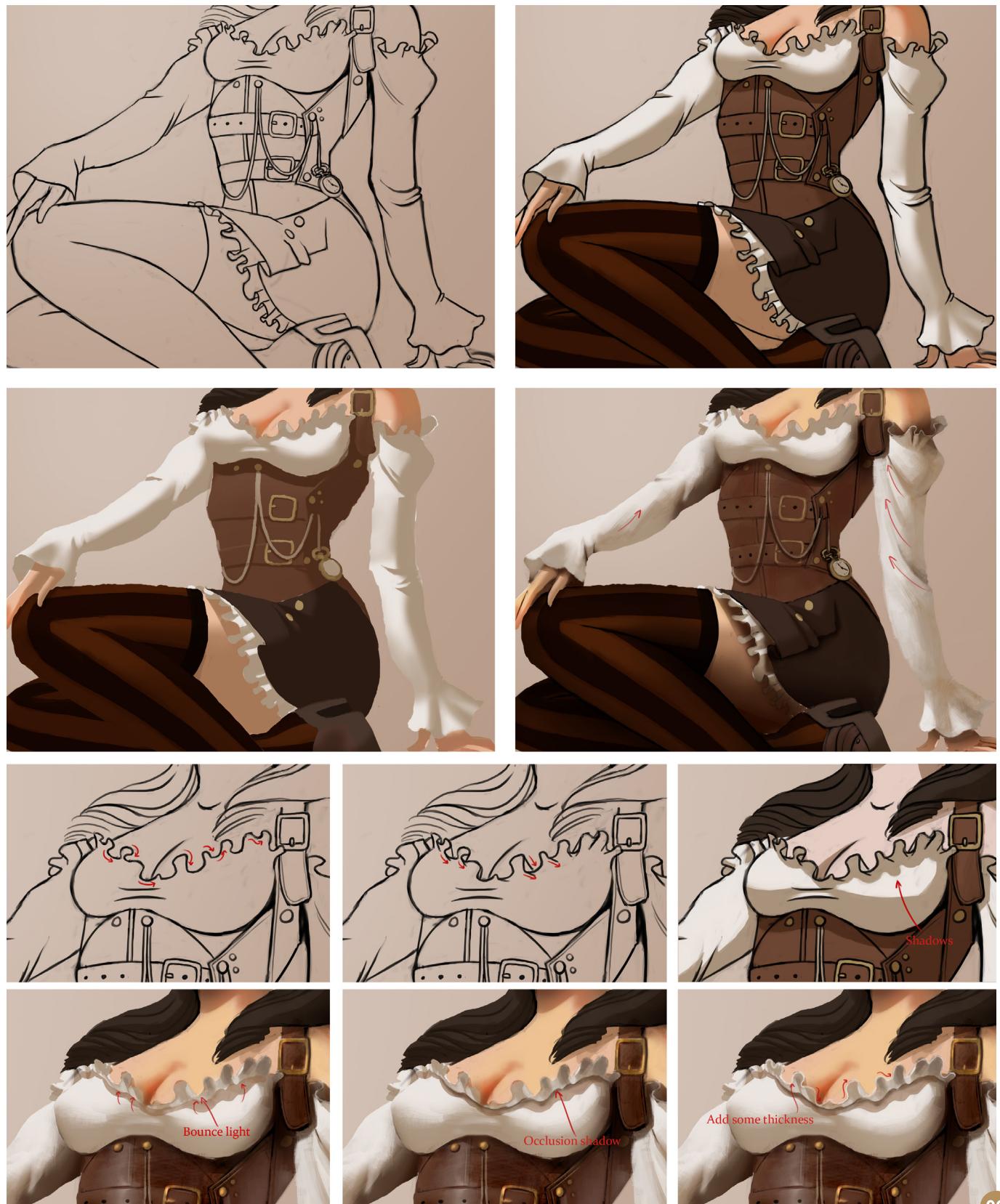
02 Renée uses a 14-pixel brush

03 Occlusion shadows always add much more depth

04 The adjustments only affect the face

05 The brush Renée uses to make the single hairs is no larger than 3-pixels

05



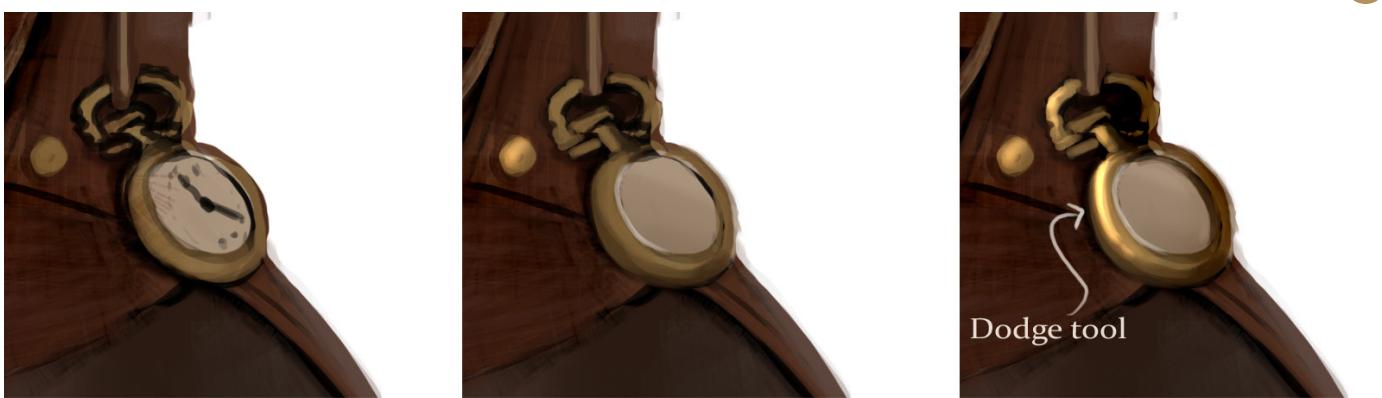
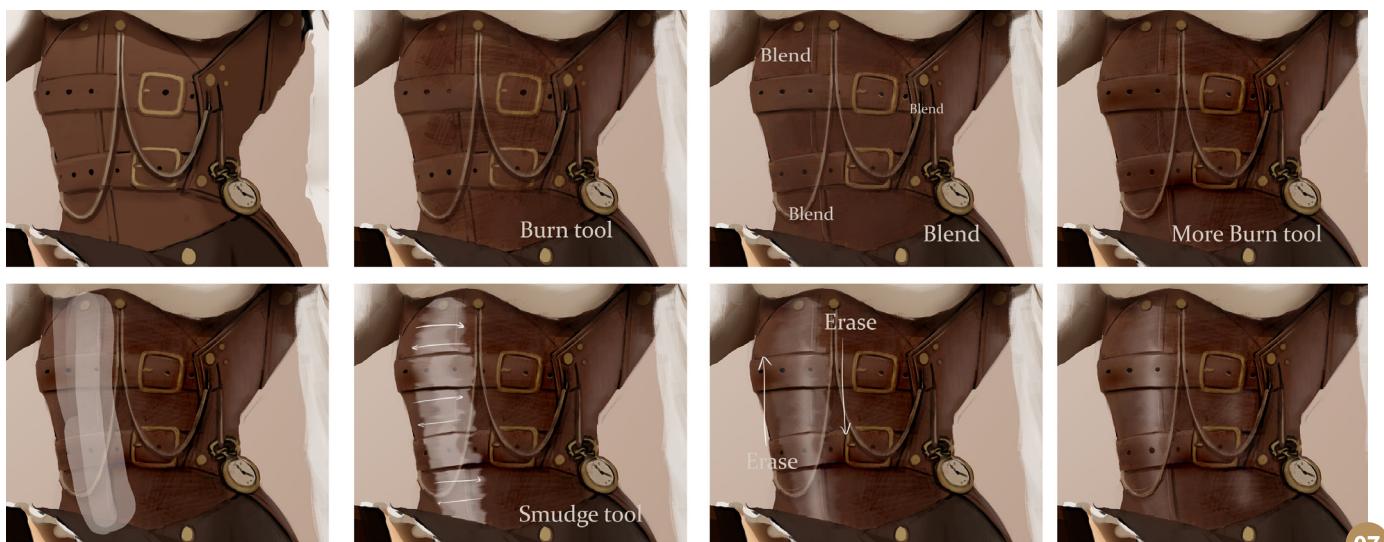
06

06 Blouse and flounce: Steampunk-styled blouses and skirts are loose and have ornaments attached to the ends of them. So I'm going to paint large folds on the blouse to make it look looser. I will also make them move towards the force that's pulling them from the corset using a custom brush to get an old fabric texture. I

create the flounce on the neckline and skirt using the following steps. I draw a tight wavy line and then draw a straight perpendicular line for each curve. Next, I shade the parts where the light can't reach inside each fold and the cast shadow. Since the blouse is white, the light will bounce off it and reflect on the folds facing down. Then I paint an

occlusion shadow between the flounce and the flat area to give it some depth. At the end I just add a light all along the edge for thickness.

07 Making leather materials: Brown leather has reddish tones that can be easily done with the Burn tool set to the Shadows



range and 5% of exposure. For the corset, I make random strokes all over the material with my custom brush, without burning it too much – just enough to bring out some reddish tones.

Then with the Brush tool and the same custom brush I pick colors from the new tones I just created and blend them together and burn it some more. The highlight on this kind of material is white and soft, so using a Hard brush I make two strokes across it, smudge it a little from side to side with the Smudge tool and a small brush, then I erase the sides with a Soft brush. I repeat the same process with the hat, although I use the Hard brush since it's an object closer to the face.

08 Generic metals and Pocket watch:

Metals in the steampunk style are not just an important part of it but they also serve as accents on the dark brown/sepia tones, so I try to make them very bright and saturated. For small metallic elements like buckles, buttons and earrings, I usually just brighten them up using the Dodge tool set to the Highlights range at 30% exposure with a Soft brush, and create harsh lights on them. For the pocket watch I polish it a little before I follow this last step, and then I paint shadows on the light to define details of the design. I'm keeping my strokes a bit rough because it's going to be so small in the composition that just the basic information will

be enough. Then I draw the numbers and the hands. At the end I paint two white strokes on a different layer for highlights on the glass. ►

06 Making the folds move towards the force will also make the sleeve more integrated

07 Combining different types of brushes make textures feel more solid

08 Renée keeps her brushstrokes rough for the small details

⚡ PRO TIPS

From general to specifics

I always sketch either on a small canvas (600 x 800) or from a certain distance if it's a large one; this forces me to work on important things such as the composition, the mood, lighting, color and design before anything else. When I zoom in on a specific area, I keep an eye on my Navigator window – if I paint something that doesn't really affect the thumbnail, it's detail. There's no use of adding details at such an early stage that won't even be seen from afar. Doing this I've learned to make textures with fewer strokes. Make the most out of the least!

Renée utilizes the Navigator when painting details



09 **Making the goggles:** As opposed to the pocket watch, the goggles will be cleaner because they're bigger and closer to the face. Each lens reminds me of an old diving helmet, so I'm going to base the design on it. The first thing I do is to polish the basic shape of the goggles; I'm adding a leather strap with studs on it to make it match the corset. Then I put rivets around each lens. This time I'm not going to use the Dodge tool for the highlights, instead I paint it with a very light yellow. On a new layer I paint the glass on the lenses and bring down the opacity to 50%. And finally, I paint the lights on the glasses, on a layer on top using white and a Soft brush. I make a single stroke on each one and then erase the top with a hard brush.

10 **Final Touches:** To finish my piece, I get an old paper texture from www.cgtextures.com and put it on top of everything (all layers). I adjust some levels and set the layer to Hard Light at 25% opacity. This will pump up the vintage look and make the darker tones reddish so that they blend better with the rest of the color palette. On a layer on top and using a large Soft brush, I create a vignette effect to make it feel cozier.



Texture



Levels adjustment



Hard Light at 100%



Hard Light at 25%

09 Renée doesn't use the Dodge tool this time because the goggles are an important part of the outfit, not just accents

10 She adds a texture over the whole of her image



09

It's very easy to achieve interesting effects in this phase. I usually start with a blue or yellow layer and change the blending mode to see if any of them improve my drawing. It's even more fun to do this with textures that have different tones and colors. It's all about experimenting and getting to know what each blending mode does. ●

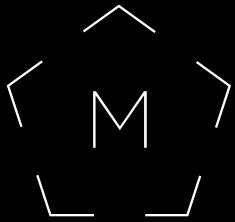
The Artist



Renée Chio

reneechio.com





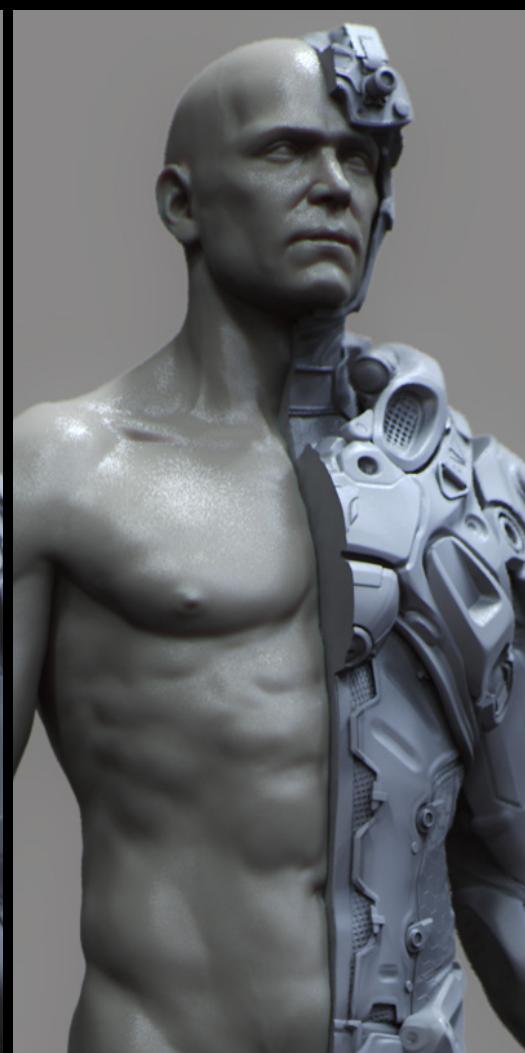
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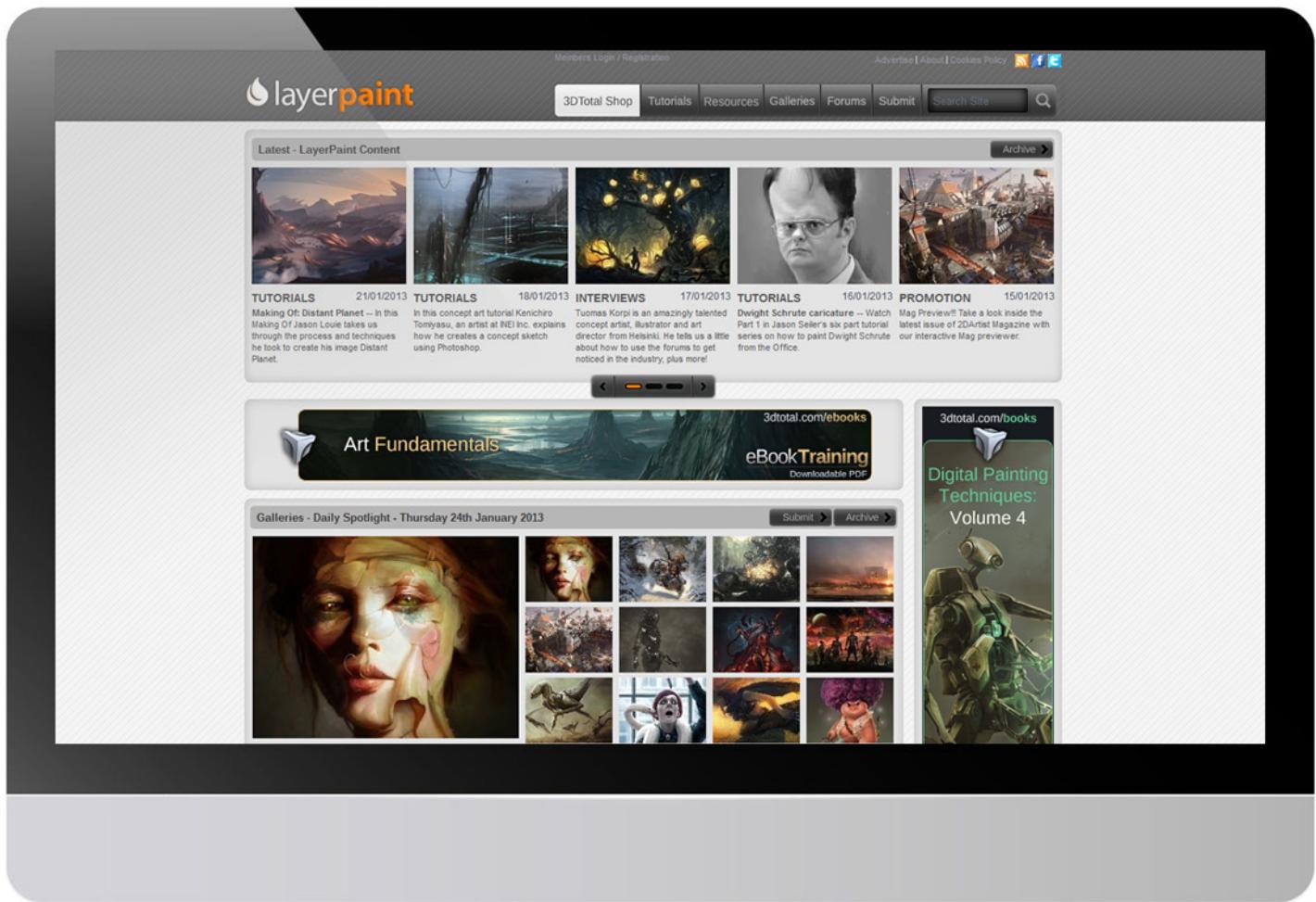


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The Artist



Romana Kendelic
alisaryn.deviantart.com

Software Used:
Photoshop

Romana is an illustrator with a background in traditional painting, who is currently working in the field of digital fantasy illustration.



Lighting a dynamic character

Romana Kendelic shares the creative workflow behind her image, *Thief*. From the initial drawing stage, to building a maquette of the background architecture, Romana shares her interesting techniques which are perfect for achieving realistic lighting setups! 

Romana Kendelic shares the techniques behind her dramatic images...

For a long time I had this undefined idea of a female character jumping into the abyss below. I think the concept of decisiveness, abandon and risk-taking is what appealed to me in the first place. When you think about it, it has similarities with plunging into a new painting. We never really know what awaits us at the end of the fall. The salvation of a well-executed work or the impact of failure.

I tried a couple of times to realize it, but was never satisfied with the result. *Thief* is the third such attempt. In this tutorial, I will try to show you some of the process behind the image, explaining why I made certain choices and sharing the techniques used.

The process is not typical for me. There was a lot of going back and forth between the drawing and painting. The piece was both under-planned and over-planned in certain areas. Probably the most important thing I learned during the process was how to make decisions for the good of the image. To cut a beloved detail just because it does not fit the whole. At one point an illustration develops a life of its own – sometimes that is not exactly what we intended at the beginning. Sometimes that can be frustrating. But the trick is to let it develop and let it grow. We as creators are here just for the ride. That is when the magic begins.

01 **Drawing the Thief:** It all started with an idea of a thief jumping off a bridge, window or cliff to escape the pursuit. I wanted to illustrate the moment after the decision had already been made, but it is still uncertain whether it was a good idea. Drawing all of that proved tricky. My model was sitting on the corner of a table, balancing while I tried to depict that feeling of falling through the air. I realized that I had to shift her center of gravity if I was to capture a sense of weightlessness just before the fall.

02 **Background references:** I had a vague idea of the background with the architecture of some old city, crumbling but still decadent; more a feeling than a developed idea. At the end I decided to base the architecture on examples from the real world – nothing too fantastical. So I went searching for references online. I looked at images of balconies, ornate windows, bridges, colonnades and medieval



01



02

alley. I built a rough cardboard maquette and photographed it under different lightings. That helped immensely with the pattern of shadows the pillars were going to cast. ▶

01 Line drawing of the main character

02 Lighting the maquette

"I added her braid to reinforce the diagonal pull of composition"

03 **Final drawing:** Drawing the bridge in three-point perspective with a dramatic angle, with all these arches, wasn't easy. It has been years since I constructed so many ellipses, and relearning took some time. I could have used a 3D program to help me with the background, but drawing it out helps me understand the forms and prepares me better for the painting to come.

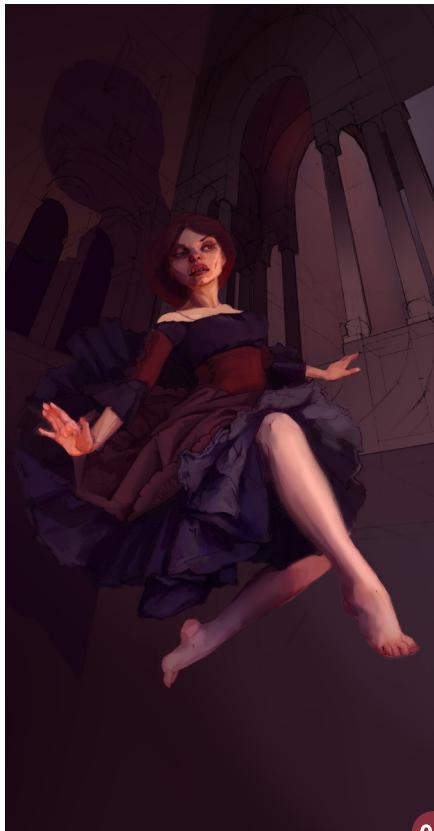
When the drawing was done I scanned it in and added the Thief. I will keep shifting the figure throughout the painting process, avoiding tangents, and trying to find just the right spot.

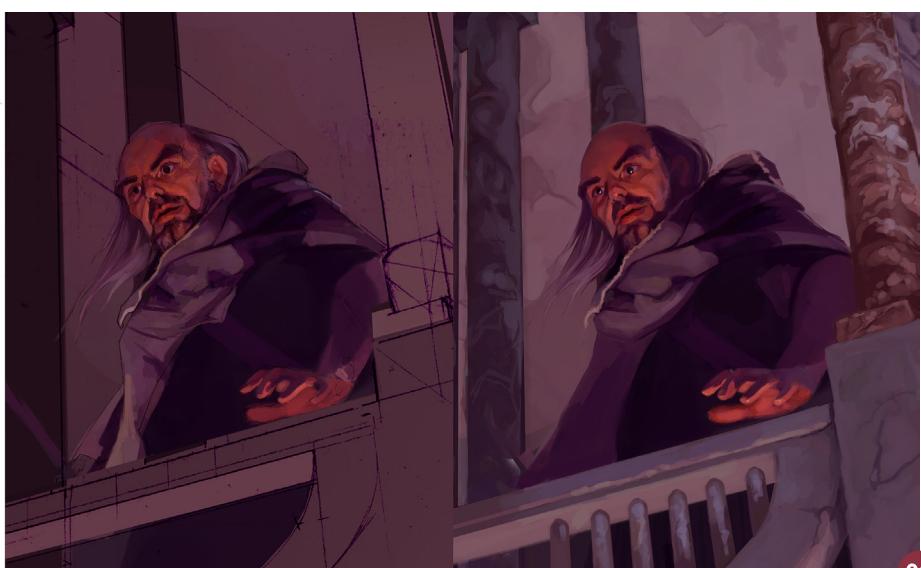
04 **Palette:** While I knew from the start that I wanted dark colors based around purples, it was important for me to properly plan the palette in advance. My main light source was going to be warm – a lantern or a torch maybe – and that asks for a limited color scheme. I chose the whole range of hues from violets to dark, saturated mauves going almost brown, with yellow/orange for a complimentary contrast, and pale-gray blues to cool the whole scheme. At this point I also painted a rough color sketch to make certain my color choices worked.

05 **Blocking:** Finally I was ready to start painting. Putting my drawings on separate layers set to Multiply, I began blocking in the basic colors. I kept it simple with just the large shapes, trying to avoid detailing at this point. I established the pattern of light and shadow and painted the big cast shadow behind the girl as I planned that as my darkest area. Much of that original plan would change as I go along, but it helped to start with the unified image. Throughout the painting process I only used a Hard Round brush set to Opacity.

06 **Background figure:** The man on the bridge went through a series of incarnations before I settled on a surprised passerby. I tried a guard on the double window left, and a group of people closer to the girl, but all of them proved too distracting.

After the initial drawing, I blocked in the large areas of the figure. I was more interested in volumes and his overall expression than any details. I also wanted to make certain that he was not just pasted in but part of the environment. I made sure that his color scheme matched and the pillar was casting a shadow across his arm and shoulder.

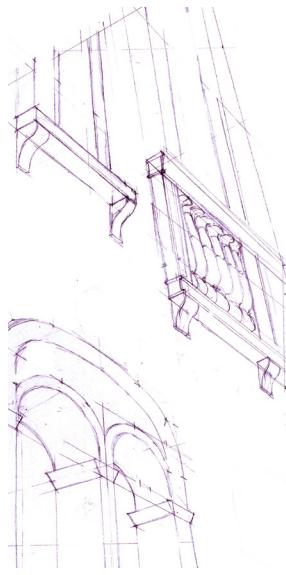




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07 Bridge: With the thief character moving on nicely it was time to concentrate on the environment. On the wall behind her I painted the pattern of peeling paint. I worked with a limited range of reds and purples.

For the bridge I looked at some images of marble slabs and pillars to get a better understanding of how they worked. I then painted in variations of color before adding the characteristic swirls and lines. It might be interesting to notice that while the bridge is painted with desaturated purples, we perceive it as being cool gray because of its placement in the vicinity of other saturated hues.

08 Far background: From the start I intended the background behind the bridge to be relatively simple. But after some failed attempts to paint it, I realized that it was once again time to go back to drawing. Following already established perspective guidelines, I drew three windows.

Also, I felt the image as a whole was too warm, so I added cool pale blues in the far background behind the bridge. This served to increase a sense of depth. I finished it with just a hint of detail, including some crumbling paint and a few cracks in the walls.

09 First details: Personally I am very fond of images that offer a wealth of details to discover. Some Old Masters were exceptionally adept at hiding entire small stories in their paintings. While *Thief* was never meant to be that detailed, I did try to add variety of textures and patterns to it. I added her braid to reinforce the ▶

03 Perspective drawing of the bridge

04 Color scheme

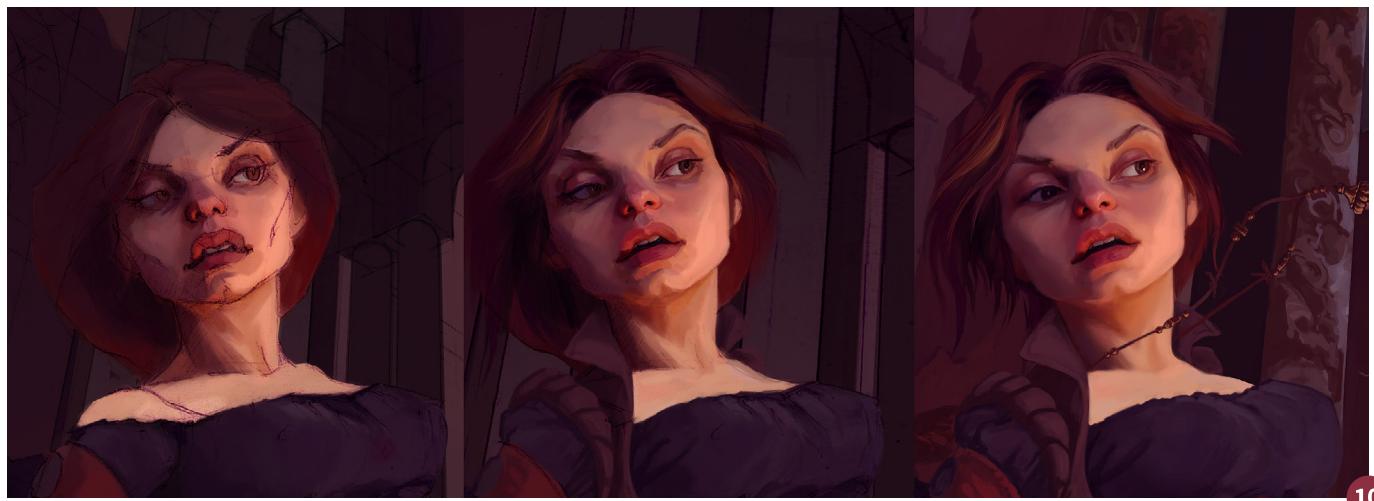
05 Laying down the first colors

06 Surprised passerby, drawing, rough and final

07 Painting the background

08 Windows in the far distance

09 Adding in details



10

“Our eye is inevitably attracted to the line of action and the highest contrast in the composition”

diagonal pull of composition. I played with swirls on the marble pillars and painted small flakes of paint around the window behind the figure. Also, I was rethinking some of my choices, in particular lighting the large cast shadow on the wall to make it blend better with the rest of the image.

10 The face: The face is always one, if not the most important aspect of the image. In this case I wanted it to be a strong, slightly angular face, caught between expressions just as the thief is suspended in mid-air. The viewer is not supposed to be certain how this is going to end, just as she is not supposed to know whether she is going to land safely. A moment later she might laugh in delight, frown with fear or smirk with derision. That is also why she makes no eye contact with the viewer. A skillful thief will keep her eyes on the prize.

11 Cropping of the image: At this point I took a step back to evaluate what I had done. And while I still liked all the little architectural details, I had to admit to myself that they were drawing the attention away from the main character. It was supposed to be about the girl, not the environment. Cropping the image was the necessary step to keep the focus where I wanted it.

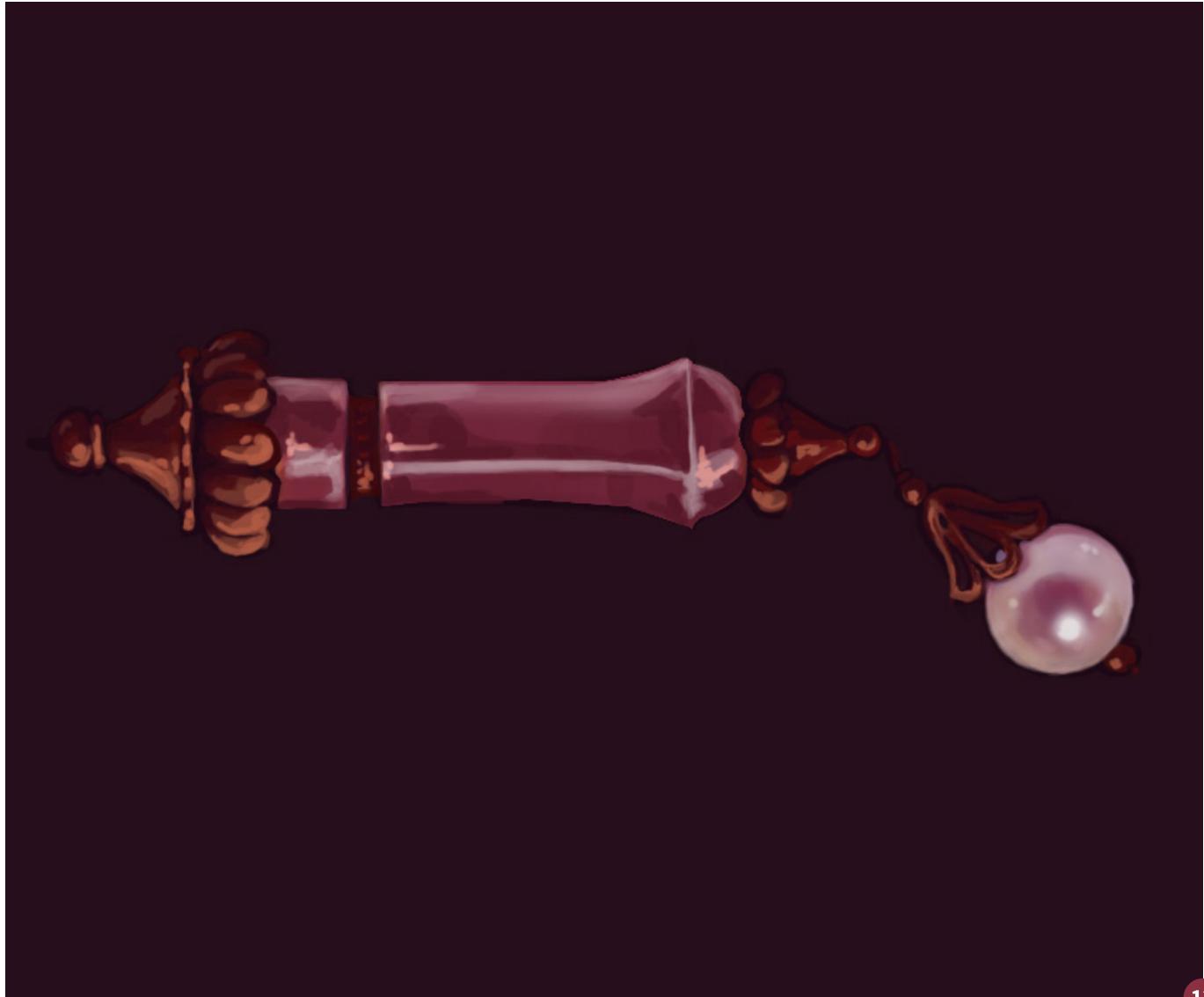
12 Lower leg: Our eye is inevitably attracted to the line of action and the highest contrast in the composition. In this case this is the thief's right lower leg and foot. I wanted it to be elegant, slightly stylized, but still anatomically correct. You may note that I started with flexed toes but gradually extended them. I believe that the contrast between flexed ankle



11



12



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and extended toes adds to the sense of tension. I saved my strongest highlights for the crest of the tibia (shinbone) and patella (kneecap).

13 Pendant: My thief needed her prize: a piece of loot that made jumping off the bridge a worthwhile prospect; a visual MacGuffin (a narrative device in the form of a desired object,

or goal that the main character pursues). It could have been a pouch of gold, gems, a priceless scroll, or anything really, but I decided to go with something smaller, more subtle – a shiny bauble. In a separate file I designed a small sealed glass container with brass ornaments and a single dangling pearl. Since it was going to be very small in the final image it didn't need to be very ▶

10 Developing the face

11 Cropped version of the image

12 Lower leg process

13 Glass and brass ornaments with a pearl

“All those painstakingly rendered details will be of no use if the image is not easy to comprehend with a single glance”

detailed, just a hint of the highlights to draw the eye was enough.

14 Costume: When designing the costume I was inspired by medieval and renaissance fashion. I tried to put together the elements from the real world that appealed to me, while still keeping it both sensible enough for a rogue to wear and fantastical to fit the context of the story.

For the billowing petticoat, I took a piece of crumpled linen cloth and draped it over the chair just to see how it moves.

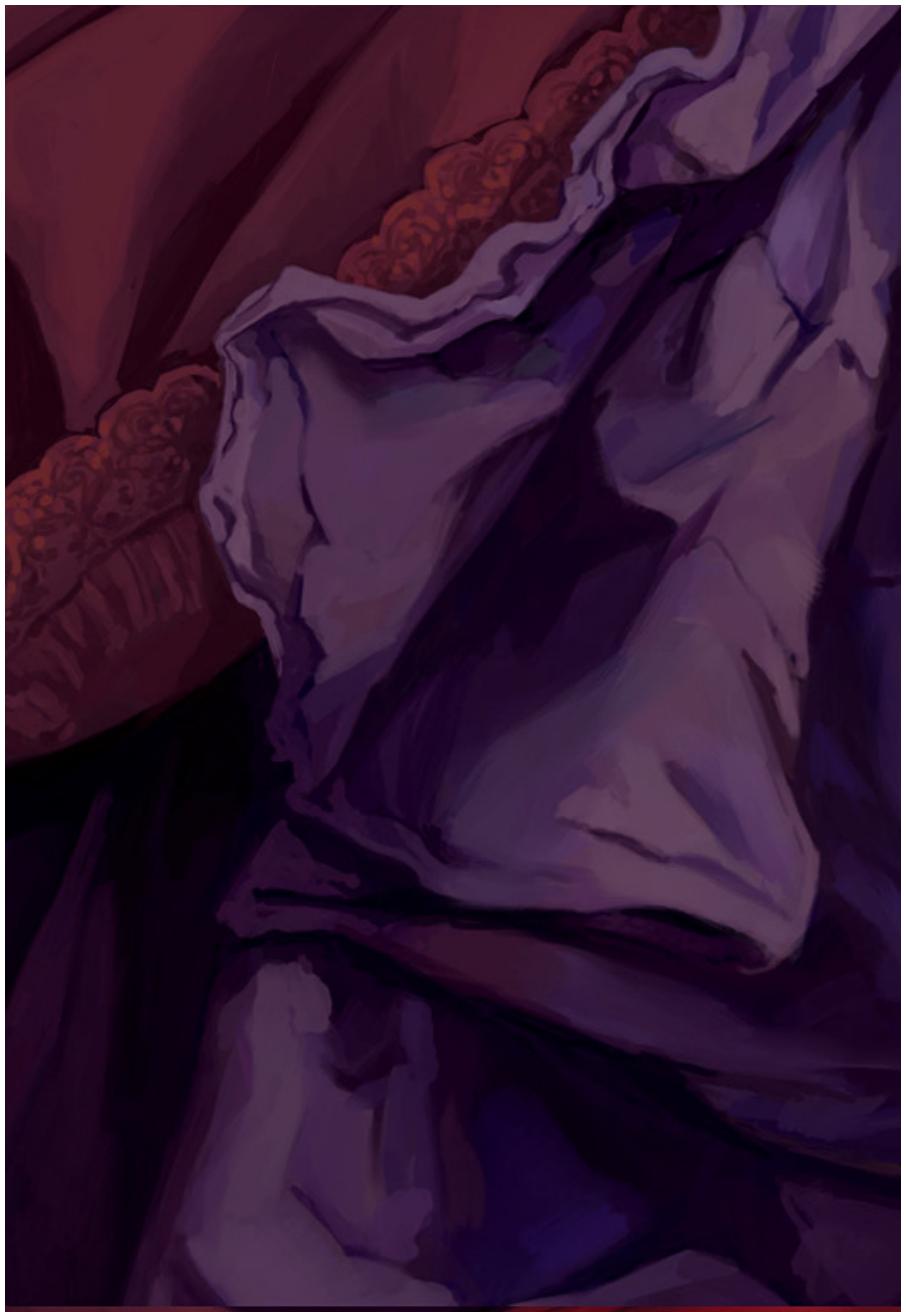
I painted the buckles on the red bodice with rough blocking in and a couple of bright highlights, creating more a suggestion of the metal than a detailed rendering.

15 Finishing touches: The illustration was now finished, but it still felt just a bit too dark. After merging the layers, I played for a while with color balance, contrasts and shadows/highlights until I was satisfied.

The readability of the image is what interests me the most at this point. All those painstakingly rendered details would be of no use if the image was not easy to comprehend with a single glance. ●

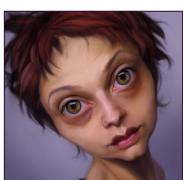
14 Folds and buckles

15 The final illustration





The Artist



Romana Kendelic
alisaryn.deviantart.com

The Artist



Gilles Beloeil
gillesbeloeil.com

Software Used:
Photoshop

Gilles Beloeil is a senior concept artist at Ubisoft Montreal.

DIGITAL ART MASTER:

Boston Common

by Gilles Beloeil

Discover the process that went into making Gilles Beloeil's incredible game environment, *Boston Common*, with this sneak-peek look inside the pages of *Digital Art Masters: Volume 8* ►





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Introduction

The goal of this concept was to help the level artists to make this area of the game interesting to look at, as at this stage they only had a flat area covered with an alignment of military tents. The challenge was to create a varied and organic look without killing the feeling of military order.

I began by doing some sketches. My first idea was to show the main character, Connor, infiltrating the camp near the tents. This worked in terms of action, but being too close to the character meant I wasn't able to describe the organization of the camp. So my only option was to set a higher point of view. Initially, I intended to show Connor planning his infiltration while observing the camp from a tree.

Painting

I wanted to recreate the feeling of morning light, so I chose colors from various photos and started blocking them in (Fig.01). I then continued mixing in some photos, textures and paint to find some interesting shapes.

It is a very fast process at the beginning. I paste a photo, a texture and/or a concept and play with it, blending, then picking colors and painting over

it again, experimenting until I find a composition that inspires me.

I had an idea in mind but it wasn't precise, so I let the flow of shapes talk to me. To work like this you have to stay focused, but relaxed at the same time. It's a fun way of working and can be efficient if you don't have a tight deadline.

Lighting

At this stage, I wasn't very happy with the lighting. The foggy atmosphere looked kind of flat and didn't add any interesting volumes. I decided to introduce a stronger key light with sharp shadows, which improved the scene (Fig.02). I liked the way this sunlight warmed up the grass and added a nice flicker across the water.

I was also able to get a stronger silhouette for the main character thanks to the bright area behind him. Something still bothered me though; the tree supporting Connor seemed in the middle of the main road which didn't feel right.

Corrections

I was concerned that the players would be unsure that Connor was looking at the camp, and confuse this with someone at the bottom of the

tree. I also didn't want a tree in the extreme left foreground with another on the right, as having two shapes so similar weakened the composition.

I needed to reconsider my overall idea to create some variety. I thought of adding a building on the right side to perch Connor on, so I decided to change the point of view. This is very time-consuming in 2D, as when the overall perspective changes, you have to repaint (or readjust) almost everything. But fortunately at this stage, it was still very sketchy without too much detail.

After this correction, the overall composition was improved and the image became more interesting. The organic shapes of the tree on the left contrasted with the very straight silhouette of the church added on the right (Fig.03).

It was now much clearer that the main character was looking at the camp and he was still silhouetted (not quite enough yet, but I decided to manage that later). I was also happier with the setup of the camp, although the ground needed some more work because it looked too clean.

I then went on to change the pose of the main character to detach his silhouette from that of the

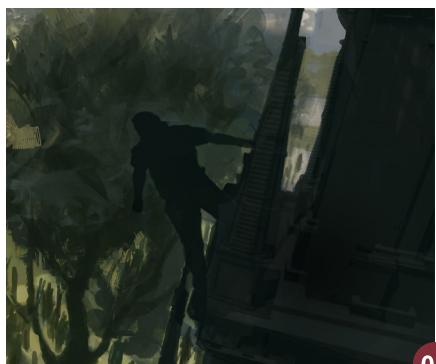




03



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church. I also changed the ratio of the image to add more sky and create contrast between the busy area on the ground and the flat region of sky above (Fig.04).

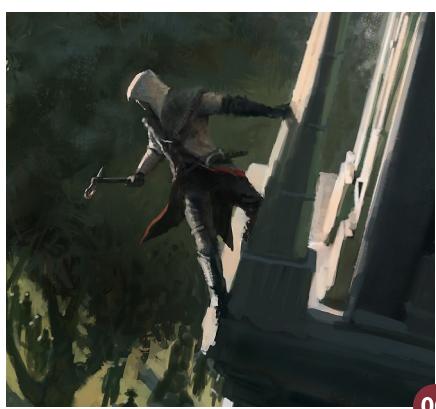
Detail

For a composition to work, the viewer's eye has to be able to rest on targeted parts of the image, because if every part is very busy, it can be difficult to focus. It is always best to create balance in each area, contrasting busy with calm, light with dark, organic with straight, and so on.

Now that it was time to add detail, I incorporated smoke, mud and further refined the main character (Fig.05). I warmed up the light on his hood because of the way it bounced off the church behind him, which helped add realism. The rim of light around him also creates a strong contrast with the dark background, and helps ensure that the viewer's eye focuses on Connor first and then on the military camp.

For the final touches, I added a camera tilt to increase the sense of vertigo and changed the shape of the tree on the left, because I didn't want to block the view on both sides (Fig.06). I also softened the edges on the horizon line with the Smudge tool to make it more interesting, and to avoid very sharp edges in an area that doesn't require them.

I also painted a layer of fog behind the character, which helped to further separate him from the background. To finish the piece, I took care of more edges, which is my favorite part of the painting process as it truly adds to the overall quality of a painting. ●



06

I added details, foliage, a crowd, soldiers and boats. I painted at a slower pace at this stage as I knew that my overall design was in place, and so was not afraid to spend some time adding all these things.

It's a common mistake to add details too soon in production because we think it will save our painting when it's looking unresolved. Always bear in mind that if your image doesn't balance well without details, it won't with them – you have to be patient and work with the big shapes first.





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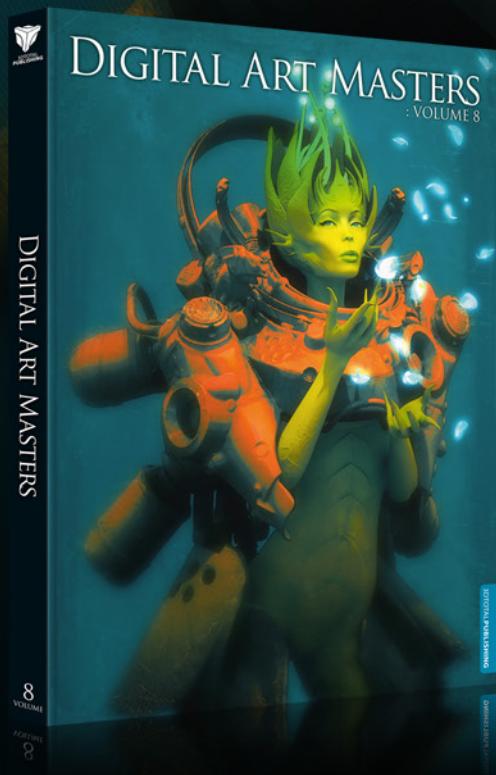
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